Ideal Language Philosophy and Experiments on Intuitions

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Proponents of linguistic philosophy hold that all non-empirical philosophical problems can be solved by either analyzing ordinary language or developing an ideal one. I review the debates on linguistic philosophy and between ordinary and ideal language philosophy. Using arguments from these debates, I argue that the results of experimental philosophy on intuitions support linguistic philosophy. Within linguistic philosophy, these experimental results support and complement ideal language philosophy. I argue further that some of the critiques of experimental philosophy are in fact defenses of ideal language philosophy. Finally, I show how much of the current debate about experimental philosophy is anticipated in the debates about and within linguistic philosophy. Specifically, arguments by ideal language philosophers support experimental philosophy.

Keywords: experimental philosophy, explication, intuition, linguistic philosophy, ordinary language philosophy, ideal language philosophy, metaphilosophy

1. Introduction

In the 20th century, philosophical method came under scrutiny by linguistic philosophers, who claimed that all philosophical problems that cannot be solved empirically can be solved by either analyzing ordinary language or developing an ideal one. In recent years, philosophical method has again been scrutinized, this time by proponents and opponents of experimental philosophy, which uses experimental methods to investigate intuitions relevant for philosophical analysis.

In defense of experimental philosophy, Knobe (2007) suggests that linguistic philosophy is too restricted in its topics, and the philosophically interesting questions should be answered with the aid of experimental phi-

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losophy. In defense of non-experimental philosophy, Williamson (2007) argues for a metaphysics based on counterfactual reasoning that leaves linguistic philosophy behind. Linguistic philosophy itself has been defended by Kauppinen (2007), who argues that intuitions about ordinary language are best elucidated without recourse to experiment. However, not all linguistic philosophy relies on ordinary language, and in the current debate about philosophical method, proponents of ideal language philosophy are conspicuously missing. This may be because "logical empiricism [has lost] its status as a philosophical project to be pursued" (Richardson 2007, 346); since ideal language philosophy was one of the main components of logical empiricism, it, too, has lost this status (Kuipers 2007, §1).

The neglect of ideal language philosophy in the current debate on intuitions and experimental philosophy is an oversight because, first, the old debate between ordinary and ideal language philosophy was never conclusively decided. If the current debate does not resolve the old debate in favor of ordinary language philosophy, ideal language philosophy is therefore as much a contender now as it ever was.

Second, in the current debate, the philosophical relevance of experiments on intuitions is sometimes challenged through an analogical consideration that, on further thought, supports ideal language philosophy (if it supports anything at all, given that it is only an analogy). Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, 129) describe the consideration in the following way:

> Upon first hearing of experimental philosophy, many philosophers conclude from the start that empirical data concerning folk intuitions are irrelevant to philosophical debates because the folk intuitions *themselves* are irrelevant to such debates. After all, scientists and mathematicians tend not to worry about whether their theories settle with the intuitions of lay-persons. Why should philosophers be any different? On this view, even if our own "expert" intuitions correctly come into play when we're doing philosophy, the untutored and uninformed intuitions of the "person on the street" have no similar role to play.

Under the assumption that "so-called intuitions are simply judgments (or dispositions to judgment)" (Williamson 2007, 3), Williamson (2007, 191) gives an elaboration of this consideration:

> Much of the evidence for cross-cultural variation in judgments on thought experiments concerns verdicts by people without philosophical training. Yet philosophy students have to learn how to apply general concepts to specific examples with careful attention to the relevant subtleties, just as law students have to learn how to analyze hypothetical cases.

In jurisprudence it may be even easier to note than in natural science or mathematics that the concepts the experts apply are not those of ordinary language. The concepts are highly refined and have been developed in science or jurisprudence itself, sometimes but not always with a basis in ordinary language. It is this kind of concept that is applied in ideal language philosophy. Therefore, this consideration is no defense of ordinary language philosophy against criticisms relying on experiments, but it may be a defense of ideal language philosophy.

Keeping the analogical consideration in mind, I am going to argue in the following that some results of experimental philosophy, if correct, support linguistic philosophy, some support ideal over ordinary language philosophy, and some provide a friendly starting point for ideal language philosophy. In the old debate about and within linguistic philosophy, experimental philosophy thus strengthens the position of ideal language philosophy. As suggested by the analogical consideration, I will then argue that ideal language philosophy can be pursued almost completely independently of experimental research on intuitions. As a historical aside, I will also show how many of the arguments in the old debate apply to the current debate about the role of intuitions and experimental results in philosophy. Specifically, I claim that the arguments by ideal language philosophers support experimental philosophy. To show this, in section 2 I will give an overview of those arguments of the old debate that are relevant to the new debate, which I will discuss in section 3.

2.   The old debate about and within linguistic philosophy

Rorty (1967a, 3) defines linguistic philosophy as "the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use". In linguistic philosophy, then, language reform or analysis alone are sufficient to either provide solutions to philosophical problems, or avoid the problems completely. At first sight, this is an implausible position, for the answers to many questions traditionally considered philosophical (say, the question of determinism or the existence of exactly one god) quite obviously need more than language reform or analysis. It seems that whether the world is deterministic should depend on what the world is like, and thus be informed by our theories of the world, and the existence of exactly one god will be more or less plausible given alternative explanations of the phenomena that occur.

Rorty's definition has to be understood to pertain to philosophy's *contribution* to the solution of problems. To the extent that empirical science can solve a problem on its own, philosophy does not have a role to play.

Philosophy's role is to solve or dissolve what is left of a problem when all the empirical work is done. As the extensive use and discussion of empirical results within logical empiricism illustrates, this position is neither in competition with empirical science, nor does it render empirical science irrelevant for philosophical questions (see Carnap 1967b, §72). It just divides the labor between empirical and linguistic work, the latter being the domain of philosophy. As Carnap (1967b, foreword) puts it, equating linguistic and logical analysis:

> In our "Vienna Circle" [...] the conviction has grown, and is steadily increasing, that metaphysics can make no claim to possessing a scientific character. That part of the work of philosophers which may be held to be scientific in its nature—excluding the empirical questions which can be referred to empirical science—consists of logical analysis.

As an illustration, consider a point made by Williamson (2007, §2.1) about questions with vague predicates like 'dry'. He argues that the question 'Was Mars always either dry or not dry?' is about Mars and is a philosophical question, and therefore philosophical questions are not always about language. A lot hinges here on the concept of aboutness, but quite simply, a positive answer to the question might be considered to entail the existence of Mars. Whether there is such a thing is an empirical question and thus clearly cannot be answered by language analysis or reform alone. The question may therefore seem like a counterexample to the position of linguistic philosophy. But in linguistic philosophy not every traditional philosophical question is considered a philosophical problem: According to linguistic philosophy, the philosophical problem of the original question about Mars is the problem that, first, must be solved in order to answer the question, and second, cannot be solved by empirical research. If Mars does not exist or if it was always dry, there is no philosophical problem, because the original question can be answered on empirical grounds. But if Mars first was not dry and then gradually became dry, the philosophical problem of the original question is whether or under what conditions something that is first ϕ and then gradually becomes not ϕ is during the whole process ϕ or not ϕ. This problem is non-empirical and at least *could* be a problem of language.[1]

Apart from this division of labor between the empirical sciences and philosophy, linguistic philosophy goes one step further and claims that non-empirical problems are always problems of language, that is, they cannot be

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[1] This treatment of the example was developed in the reading group of the Theoretical Philosophy Unit at Utrecht University in the winter term of 2008/2009, in particular by Harmen Ghijsen and Jesper Tijmstra.

solved in any other way but by language analysis or reform. Thus, according to linguistic philosophy, in Williamson's question about Mars the philosophical problem can only be solved by analyzing or stipulating the use of the terms 'or' and 'not', or by avoiding the problem altogether, say, by developing a language without vague terms. Let me call problems that cannot be solved, questions that cannot be answered, and statements that cannot be confirmed by empirical or linguistic means or a combination thereof 'trans-empirical'.[2] Linguistic philosophy then claims that trans-empirical problems cannot be solved at all. That so far no trans-empirical question has been answered to almost everyone's satisfaction is seen as evidence for this (see Rorty 1967a, §1).

One purported way to answer traditional philosophical questions even if they are trans-empirical or lead to trans-empirical problems is the use of intuition. But there are many meanings of 'intuition'; for example, Feigl (1958, 2) distinguishes seven of them, where

> [t]he common core in the many connotations of "intuition" is, of course, *immediacy*. Intuition has thus been contrasted, traditionally and quite generally, with indirect, mediate, relational, or inferential knowledge. Intuition is often identified with direct insight or immediate apprehension.

Since Feigl's main interest is in trans-empirical claims, his discussion focuses on the justifiability of "mystical or trans-empirical intuition", where "the target or object of the intuition is claimed to be something that is absolutely beyond the reach of ordinary experience and reasoning, something which cannot be checked empirically" (Feigl 1958, 6). Note that Feigl makes a clear distinction between an intuition and its target, the target being the statement for which the intuition is purported evidence. Using intuitions to answer trans-empirical questions goes beyond what is accepted in linguistic philosophy, and must be distinguished from another meaning of intuition that Feigl (1958, 6) calls, for lack of a better word, 'hunch':

> We can define the "hunch", then, as "a product of learning from past experience, which learning is not made explicit at the moment of the use of judgment".

If one has a hunch, one follows an empirical rule of which one is not aware. Hunches are therefore unproblematic, but must not be confused with trans-empirical intuitions, because unlike the target of a hunch, the target of a trans-empirical intuition cannot be tested empirically (Feigl 1958, 6f). In

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[2] In the old debate about linguistic philosophy, these problems, questions, and statements were often called 'metaphysical' or 'speculative', but the first term is often used differently in current philosophical discussions, and the second seems unnecessarily pejorative.

general, "[i]f 'intuition' in one of its many senses designates a way of knowing, it need not, and indeed does not, designate such a way in some of the other senses" (Feigl 1958, 1).

One could argue for the truth of the targets of intuitions that are shared among many people with an inference to the best explanation. Against this, Feigl (1958, 12f) points out that intuitions can be treated by empirical psychology just like other mental states. It might then be possible to account for the occurrence of shared intuitions, that is, to explain why different people have intuitions with the same targets without having to assume their truth.

This line of research into the source of intuitions is taken up by Hare (1975, §I), who rhetorically asks: "[H]ow do we know whether what we feel inclined to say [about some example of a moral conflict] has any secure ground? May we not feel inclined to say it just because of the way we were brought up to think?" For Hare, our intuitions may simply be the result of our upbringing, and will differ accordingly.

Given the lack of consensus on trans-empirical questions and Feigl's hope of explaining trans-empirical intuitions without assuming the truth of their targets, it seems that language analysis or reform may be the only means of rationally solving problems that cannot be answered empirically (see also Bohnert 1963, §I). Ordinary language philosophy claims that trans-empirical problems only occur when language is not used in ordinary ways, and therefore, the analysis of ordinary language is enough to solve philosophical problems (Rorty 1967a, 12).

Hare (1975, §III) gives an example of this when he rejects the use of the term 'person' in the discussion of the problem of abortion, because

> 'person' […] is not a fully determinate concept [.] It is no use looking more closely at the fetus to satisfy ourselves that it is *really* a person […]; we already have all the information that we need about the fetus. […]
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> To say that the fetus is (or is not) a person gives *by itself* no moral reason for or against killing it; it merely incapsulates any reasons we may have for including the fetus within a certain category of creatures that it is, or is not, wrong to kill (i. e. persons or nonpersons). The word 'person' is doing no work here (other than that of bemusing us).

Hare claims that because the concept of a person is not determinate in the case of a fetus, one should avoid the question of whether a fetus is a person altogether. Trying to answer it in order to solve the problem of abortion would be to use language in a non-ordinary way, and would therefore only introduce trans-empirical problems because neither language nor empirical

science can decide the personhood question. If Hare now solves the problem of abortion in some other way, he thereby dissolves the problem of the personhood of the fetus.

According to ideal language philosophy, there are so many concepts in ordinary language that are not fully determinate that many philosophical problems cannot be solved in ordinary language at all. Other problems with ordinary language include the ambiguity of words even in ordinary contexts, and the possible embedding of false beliefs in the rules of ordinary language, as Maxwell and Feigl (1961) argue. When applied to philosophical questions, these problems worsen, and so ideal language philosophers claim that philosophical problems are best solved by the development of new languages and the regimentation of ordinary terms, also called their "improvement" (Carnap 1963, §19), "reform" (Maxwell and Feigl 1961), or "explication" (Carnap 1962, §§2–5). Carnap (1962, §2) describes this process:

> The task of *explication* consists in transforming a given more or less inexact concept into an exact one or, rather, in replacing the first by the second. We call the given concept (or the term used for it) the *explicandum*, and the exact concept proposed to take the place of the first (or the term proposed for it) the *explicatum*. The explicandum may belong to everyday language or to a previous stage in the development of scientific language.

Finding an exact explicatum for an inexact explicandum is not a straightforward matter. The first step is to describe the explicandum as precisely as possible. This description forms the basis for the explication itself, which Carnap (1962, §3) describes as follows:

> If a concept is given as explicandum, the task consists in finding another concept as its explicatum which fulfils the following requirements to a sufficient degree.
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> 1. The explicatum is to be *similar to the explicandum* in such a way that, in most cases in which the explicandum has so far been used, the explicatum can be used; however, close similarity is not required, and considerable differences are permitted.
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> 2. The characterization of the explicatum, that is, the rules of its use (for instance, in the form of a definition), is to be given in an *exact* form, so as to introduce the explicatum into a well-connected system of scientific concepts.
>
> 3. The explicatum is to be a *fruitful* concept, that is, useful for the formulation of many universal statements (empirical laws in the case of a nonlogical concept, logical theorems in the case of a logical concept).

> 4. The explicatum should be as *simple* as possible; this means as simple as the more important requirements (1), (2), and (3) permit.

The difference between ideal and ordinary language philosophy is clear: According to ideal language philosophy, the analysis of a concept carried out in ordinary language philosophy is only the preliminary step needed for an explication in Carnap's sense. This explication not only results in a more precise concept, but often also in a concept that conflicts with clear cases of the originating one. As Carnap (1962, §3) notes, "one might perhaps think that the explicatum should be as close to or as similar with the explicandum as the latter's vagueness permits", but he claims that "this requirement would be too strong" because of requirement (3). That the requirement of fruitfulness sometimes leads to conflicts between an explicatum and clear cases of its explicandum can be seen from "the actual procedure of scientists", for example in zoology's explication of 'fish': "The prescientific term 'fish' was meant in about the sense of 'animal living in water'" (I would also add 'approximately drop-shaped'), while the zoologists' explicatum means "animals which live in water, are cold-blooded vertebrates, and have gills throughout life" (Carnap 1962, §3).

It is important to note that Carnap's discussion of explication in this passage and in many others relies on examples from the sciences. Explication is therefore not only a philosopher's tool. Indeed, "[p]hilosophers, scientists, and mathematicians make explications very frequently" (Carnap 1962, §3), which Hempel (1952, 664, §3) also points out:

> Explication is not restricted to logical and mathematical concepts [...]. Thus, e.g. the notions of purposiveness and of adaptive behavior, whose vagueness has fostered much obscure or inconclusive argumentation about the specific characteristics of biological phenomena, have become the objects of systematic explicatory efforts. [...] Similarly, the controversy over whether a satisfactory definition of personality is attainable in purely psychological terms or requires reference to a cultural setting centers around the question whether a sound explicatory or predictive theory of personality is possible without the use of sociocultural parameters; thus, the problem is one of explication.

As the examples of 'temperature' (Carnap 1962, §§4f) and 'mass' (Hempel 1952, §§11f) also show, some of the fundamental concepts of science are the results of explication.

It has frequently been pointed out by proponents of ordinary and ideal language philosophy that the distinction between their two approaches is only a matter of degree (for example by Carnap 1963, §19, and Hare 1960, 158), for one because the preliminary step of an explication consists in describing the natural language concept. Rorty (1967a, 12) puts it this way: "As

has often been (somewhat crudely, but fairly accurately) said, the only difference between Ideal Language Philosophers and Natural Language Philosophers is a disagreement about which language is Ideal". Still, each side considers its own approach to be more appropriate for solving philosophical problems, as the discussions collected by Rorty (1967b), the criticism of ideal language philosophy by Strawson (1963), and the response by Carnap (1963, §19) make clear.

The central charge by Strawson (1963, 504f) is that ideal language philosophy's "claim to clarify will seem empty, unless the results achieved have some bearing on the typical philosophical problems and difficulties which arise concerning the concepts to be clarified". Bergmann (1949) counters this kind of criticism, arguing that these problems arising in ordinary language use need not be solved in the first place, but can be avoided without loss. For, the goal of an ideal language is precisely one of expressing and analyzing empirical claims without leading to such problems. The ideal language can use explicata rather than the explicanda of ordinary language philosophy, and if some statement in the ideal language helps to answer a question phrased in ordinary language, say, because the explicata involved are sufficiently close to the explicanda, this is nice but not necessary. A supporting position is taken up by Bohnert (1963, §II) and arguably Neurath (1932, 206), who argue that an ideal language does not need to be translated into ordinary language to be understood, because it can be learned by itself like a natural language (cf. Carnap 1963, 938f). Rorty (1967a, 16) notes the possible pragmatic response that the success of each of the different approaches will decide its viability, and so far, ordinary language has not shown itself to be very helpful for solving philosophical problems (see also Maxwell and Feigl 1961, 491f).

In a critique of ordinary language philosophy, Maxwell and Feigl (1961, 490f, emphasis removed) point out that "[a] large portion of philosophical problems arise from consideration of unusual cases", and they see "absolutely no reason to believe that examination of ordinary use in the 'paradigm', normal cases can provide us with definitive rules for 'proper' use in the unusual and novel cases". In other words, Strawson's insistence on the use of ordinary language in order to clarify philosophical problems may be exactly why there is continuing disagreement. Maxwell and Feigl (1961, 491) state further that the "consideration of atypical cases often points up possible inadequacies and may suggest improvements in our conceptualization of the 'normal' cases". This clearly marks the move from ordinary to ideal language philosophy: If a concept is, for example, too vague to be applied in atypical but philosophically interesting cases, this necessitates its explication, which may lead to a concept that is applied differently even in typical cases.

Mates (1958) discusses ordinary language philosophy from a point of view that will be particularly useful in what follows: He treats the apparently factual statements that are made in ordinary language philosophy like any other empirical hypotheses, and accordingly asks how such statements could be tested. First Mates (1958, 165) considers the claim that

> the average adult has already amassed such a tremendous amount of empirical information about the use of his native language, that he can depend upon his own intuition or memory and need not undertake a laborious questioning of other people, even when he is dealing with the tricky terms which are central in philosophical problems. Such a assertion is itself an empirical hypothesis, of a sort which used to be invoked in favor of armchair psychology, and it is not born out by the facts.

Mates goes on to state that many authors are not even reliable when it comes to their own behavior, and after noting a disagreement between Ryle and Austin about the use of 'voluntary', concludes: "If agreement about usage cannot be reached within so restricted a sample as the class of Oxford Professors of Philosophy, what are the prospects when the sample is enlarged?" (Mates 1958, 165)

Mates then suggests that there are essentially two empirical methods for determining the meaning and use of a word, which he calls extensional and intensional. The extensional method consists in observing a certain number of applications of a word and finding out what these application have in common. Mates sees this method used almost exclusively in the ordinary language philosophy of his time, and laments the neglect of the intensional method. In the intensional method, the subjects are asked how they use or what they mean by a given word, and, "in Socratic fashion", are subsequently presented with apparent counterexamples and borderline cases, are asked to revise their initial response, and so on, until a fairly stable account is reached (Mates 1958, 165f). However, Mates observes that there is no guarantee these two methods will yield the same results, and the only way to solve this problem may be to make do with the different meanings of words that result from each method.

Furthermore, Mates argues, both methods have internal difficulties. In the extensional method, it is unclear which occurrences of a word are under consideration, and what the relevant features are of any object to which the word is applied. Since any set of objects will have infinitely many things in common, it is, for example, not obvious when a word has more than one meaning. Two words might also, just by happenstance, apply to the same objects in the domain under investigation (Mates 1958, 167f).

The problem with the intensional method is that "it does not seem possible to differentiate in a practical way between *finding out* what someone

means by a word, and *influencing* his linguistic behavior relative to that word"
(Mates 1958, 169f). Mates suggests we test this by trying to devise "Socratic
questionnaires" that make the definitions from different subjects converge,
and others that make them diverge. If it is possible to construct the latter,
the Socratic method cannot be considered a reliable means of finding out
the meanings of words (Mates 1958, 171, n. 11).

This doubt about the reliability of the intensional method is also voiced
by Maxwell and Feigl (1961, 489), who "know of no decision procedure for
classifying each particular case [as one of finding out or of influencing], and
[...] strongly suspect that many cases of putative ordinary-usage analysis
are, in fact, disguised reformations". Accordingly, ideal language philosophy
cannot be dismissed on the grounds that a change of language introduces
insurmountable problems, because the intensional, Socratic method of or-
dinary language philosophy may very well lead to as much of a change of
meaning as the process of explication. The difference between ideal and or-
dinary language philosophy then would be mainly that, while explication is
done with very specific, explicitly stated goals in mind, it is not clear how or
why the change of language is effected in the intensional method of ordinary
language philosophy.

But even though ideal language philosophers are doubtful of the possi-
bility of solving philosophical problems through ordinary language analysis,
there is no doubt that the ordinary use of terms can be determined in some
cases and that the construction of an ideal language can be inspired by or-
dinary language. Like Mates, ideal language philosophers consider claims
about ordinary language to be empirical hypotheses. Carnap (1963, §15.C),
for example, states when discussing an article of his on meaning and syn-
onymy in natural languages:

> "The sentence S_1 is analytic in language L for person X" [...] is an em-
> pirical hypothesis which can be tested by observations of the speaking
> behavior of X. If anyone is still sceptical about this possibility, I should
> like to refer him to a recent book by Arne Naess, which shows by nu-
> merous examples how hypotheses about the synonymy of expressions
> can be tested by empirical procedures.

The book, which Carnap identifies in a footnote, is *Interpretation and Pre-
ciseness: A Contribution to the Theory of Communication* (Naess 1953). It is
an empirical study of natural language, much as demanded by Mates. In his
own article on meaning and synonymy, Carnap (1955, §1) notes how such
a study of natural language (which he calls "pragmatics") may be useful for
the logician's development of an ideal language (which he calls "semantics"):

> If he wishes to find out an efficient form for a language system to
> be used, say, in a branch of empirical science, he might find fruit-

> ful suggestions by a study of the natural development of the language
> of scientists and even of the everyday language. Many of the concepts
> used today in pure semantics were indeed suggested by correspond-
> ing pragmatical concepts which had been used for natural languages
> by philosophers or linguists, though usually without exact definitions.
> Those semantical concepts were, in a sense, intended as explicata for
> the corresponding pragmatical concepts.

Carnap then goes on to describe an experimental procedure for determining
the meaning of terms.

So the empirical study of ordinary language use can be of much value
for ideal language philosophers. They do object, however, to the claim that
the results of such empirical research can show their constructed ideal lan-
guages wrong. As Popper (1963, 201, n. 44) recalls, Naess began his research
for an earlier book, *"Truth" as Conceived by those who are not Professional
Philosophers* (1938), "in the hope to refute Tarski" (that is, Tarski's explication
of 'truth'). Carnap (1948, 29, §7) replies that

> Arne Ness [sic] has expressed some doubts about the assertion [that
> Tarski's explication is in agreement with the ordinary use of the word
> 'true'], based on systematic questioning of people. At any rate, this
> question is of a pragmatical (historical, psychological) nature and has
> not much bearing on the questions of the method and result of se-
> mantics.

Carnap's opinion is shared by Popper (1963, 213, n. 64), who describes the re-
ply as "a just dismissal of the relevance of Arne Ness' questionnaire method".
This makes sense, given that an explication is not meant to capture ordinary
language use.

In general, ideal language philosophers see the analysis of ordinary lan-
guage as a straightforwardly empirical endeavor whose results are comple-
mentary to their own. The empirical results can serve as a starting point for
explication or as inspiration for the construction of an ideal language, and in
this respect, ideal language philosophy can profit from the analysis of ordi-
nary language. But results from this analysis will not contradict those from
ideal language philosophy, because ideal languages need not capture every
feature of ordinary language. As Maxwell and Feigl (1961, 491) put it, "ordi-
nary language *is* (often) the first word—but, quite often, this is all that it can
do".

3.   The new debate about intuitions and experiments

Since the discussion by Feigl (1958), the use of intuition has had a remark-
able renaissance in philosophy. Hintikka (1999) spells out how Chomsky
was perceived to have based his approach to linguistics on the intuitions of

the linguist and his success contributed to an increased use of intuition in philosophy. Symons (2008) describes how G. E. Moore's conception of common sense, embraced by ordinary language philosophers, became a tool in Kripke's trans-empirical philosophy, and hence far removed from the original idea of ordinary language as a restriction on trans-empirical claims. This jumbled heritage of contemporary uses of intuition has led to two distinct forms of use. Sometimes, an intuition is considered to be a judgment of common sense, and sometimes, intuition has an evidential role analogous to that of perception because of its immediacy (cf. Feigl 1958).

Although the historical connections between trans-empirical and ordinary language philosophy and the contemporary uses of intuition are fascinating, they will not be my main focus in this section. Rather, I aim to show that conceptually, experimental and ideal language philosophy are complementary in two very distinct ways. First, the assumptions of each approach are supported by the other: Ideal language philosophers, in their critiques of trans-empirical philosophy and of non-empirical approaches to ordinary language, provide arguments in favor of experimental philosophy. The results of experimental philosophy, if correct, show the empirical premises of the ideal language philosophers' critiques to be true. Second, beyond their mutual support, the two approaches are independent, in the sense that the results of one approach cannot prove or disprove the results of the other.

In an overview of experimental philosophy, Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, §2) identify its three strains of research: experimental restrictionism, experimental analysis, and experimental descriptivism, which can roughly be described as determining *that* people's intuitions differ, *how* they differ, and *why* they differ in the way they do. Experimental restrictionism is a cautionary research program, whose results have indicated gross differences in people's answers to philosophical questions that have often been considered to have intuitive answers. Experimental analysis tries to identify the factors upon which differences and commonalities in intuition depend, and experimental descriptivism attempts to find the neurophysiological sources of intuitions.

Experimental restrictionism provides a confirmation of Mates's hypothesis that the disagreement over ordinary language use among Oxford professors of philosophy is only one case of a wider disagreement in the general population. When intuitions lead to differing moral judgments, experimental restrictionism is very much in line with Hare's contention that there is no reason to assume our intuitions will agree in difficult moral situations. Therefore, experimental restrictionism is a problem for the common sense conception of intuition, and this holds whether intuitions disagree on linguistic (and therefore empirical) matters, or on non-linguistic matters (be

they empirical or trans-empirical). It also presents a prima facie problem with the use of intuition in analogy to perception, because when there is disagreement between intuitions, at least some of these intuitions must be wrong, and sometimes they might all be. Analogously to perception, then, the more experimental philosophy restricts the domain of agreement between intuitions, the less useful intuitions are as evidence for their targets.

Experimental analysis adds to experimental restrictionism, because its results suggest that intuitions depend on social status and cultural background. These dependencies are a concretization of Hare's rather general suggestion that our intuitions are a result of our upbringing.

Liao (2008) has pointed out that the results of experimental analysis have shown *some* intuitions to be robust. Recalling Maxwell and Feigl's (1961) objection to ordinary language philosophy, one can see that for Liao's point to be a defense of the methods of ordinary language philosophy, he must further show that the robust intuitions are also philosophically relevant, do not embody factually false assumptions, and do not involve concepts that should be reformed for other reasons. However, even then, this would not defend the wide applicability of common sense intuitions as evidence for trans-empirical claims, that is, it would not undermine linguistic philosophy itself. For, trans-empirical intuitions cannot simply be *assumed* to be evidence for their targets, and whether they *are* evidence cannot be tested independently. As discussed earlier, shared intuitions might justify the truth of their targets by an inference to the best explanation, but as Feigl notes, such an argument would be weakened by the existence of other explanations for shared intuitions. Experimental descriptivism aims at providing such an alternative explanation: since experimental descriptivism relies only on empirical claims, it would, if successful, provide an explanation of shared intuitions that does not rely on the truth of their trans-empirical targets.

Experimental descriptivism hence may eventually come to support linguistic over non-linguistic philosophy by explaining shared trans-empirical intuitions. Experimental analysis and experimental restrictionism support those arguments against trans-empirical and ordinary language philosophy that are based on the systematic disagreement of people's intuitions.

Of course, trans-empirical philosophy and ordinary language philosophy have both been defended against criticisms from experimental philosophy. In defense of trans-empirical philosophy, Sosa (2007, 101) proposes an account of intuitions that gives them an evidential status analogous to perception (though he disavows the perceptual model of intuition), applicable to any kind of statement. He bases his analogy between intuition and perception on competence: On his proposal, "to intuit that p is to be attracted to assent simply through entertaining that representational content. The intu-

ition is *rational* if and only if it derives from competence, and the content is explicitly modal". There is "no very deep reason [for the restriction to modal propositions]. It's just that it seems the proper domain for philosophical uses of intuition". An intuition is thus the (possibly irrational) inclination to agree with a proposition. The rationality of an intuition, that is, the justification for believing its target to be true, stems from competence. Referring to Sosa's conception of intuition, Symons (2008, 87f, §8) argues that competence can be established by empirical research: "[T]he lasting significance of experimental philosophy is not that it undermines appeals to consensus, but that it opens a fertile field of inquiry into our commonsense or intuitive capacities". Specifically, "determining the boundaries of our competence is the most fruitful task that lies ahead for experimental philosophy".

The important question then is the source of the competence claim, and here Feigl's distinction between trans-empirical intuitions and hunches becomes important. For hunches, competence can be established by empirically testing the statement for which the hunch is supposed to be evidence. Claiming competence then amounts to claiming a correlation between the occurrence of a hunch and the truth of its target. It is this correlation that can be the object of empirical study, and thus of experimental philosophy. Experiments done on hunches have demonstrated systematic mistakes among children, laypersons, and experts, as Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, 125, 129) point out, and optical illusions cause systematic mistakes in the case of perception, so competence cannot simply be assumed. Therefore, even *if* there is a successful analogical argument from competence in the case of hunches or perceptions to competence in the case of trans-empirical intuitions, the latter suffer, according to the analogy, from systematic mistakes as well.

Since trans-empirical intuitions cannot be tested like hunches or perceptions, competence claims are outside the realm of experimental philosophy and empirical research in general, and have to be established in some other way. This needs to be done in order to show that trans-empirical intuitions are indeed evidence for their targets in the same way perceptions are, and that therefore linguistic philosophy is mistaken. If competence claims cannot be established, there may also be no other justification to prefer one person's intuitions over another's. Without such a justification, empirical restrictionism's results cannot be rendered irrelevant by considering only preferred intuitions. Further justifications pending, the results of experimental philosophy therefore support linguistic philosophy, that is, pose a problem for trans-empirical philosophy.

In a critique of experimental philosophy, Kauppinen (2007) argues that ordinary language philosophy can only be pursued by what Mates calls the

intensional method, and claims that experimental philosophy is in princi-
ple restricted to the extensional method. The latter claim is decisively criti-
cized by Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007), who point out the possibility of
devising the Socratic questionnaires that Mates suggests for the intensional
method. Kauppinen's criticism hence loses its force against experimental
philosophy. It is still noteworthy, though, that with this claim Kauppinen
moves away from the historical practice of overly relying on the extensional
method, which was lamented by Mates, to the other extreme of excluding it
completely.

Kauppinen further argues that the intensional method can be expected
to yield converging results because people can communicate. However, as
Mates has pointed out, this argument does not establish that people use
words with the same meaning they would settle on via the intensional met-
hod. Whether there is such a convergence of meaning is very much an em-
pirical question, to be tested, for example, by the method Mates proposes.
And even then, that agreement exists in *some* cases does not imply agree-
ment in the difficult ones, as Maxwell and Feigl have noted. In their reply to
Kauppinen, Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, 144, n. 36) state as much.

Concluding his critique, Kauppinen (2007, 110) claims that "assessing
the truth of intuition claims can remain a relatively armchair business [...].
We are entitled to have confidence in such reflection, since we take a lot of
real-life experience of using concepts to the armchair with us". That is, the in-
tensional method can be replaced by recourse to the investigator's intuitions
about the use of her native language. The argument is rejected by Nadelhof-
fer and Nahmias (2007, 129) once again with Mates's point that Kauppinen's
claim is an empirical one that must be tested.

Without having established the possibility for the ordinary language
philosopher to rely on her intuitions alone, Kauppinen is forced to accept
Mates's intensional method as the only viable one. Therefore, Mates's worry
about this method becomes acute: It is not clear how to distinguish between
finding out and influencing what someone takes a word's meaning to be.
Kauppinen (2007, §5.1) himself notes that one is "never free of the danger
of leading the witness in the direction favored by the questioner", but does
not suggest a way to avoid this influence. As detailed above, Maxwell and
Feigl turn this into an argument for ideal language philosophy by suggest-
ing that there is no such way, while Mates at least thinks that one can test
this empirically.

In their argument for ideal language philosophy, Maxwell and Feigl go
beyond simply arguing that in the intensional method, ordinary language
philosophy cannot help but reform language. They hold that philosophers
should reform language, because ordinary language may not be good enough

to solve or dissolve philosophical problems. Philosophical language must contain explicata, not explicanda. It is this reliance on explicata, and constructed languages more generally, that ensures the independence of ideal language philosophy from folk intuition, just as the analogical consideration mentioned in the beginning suggests. Underlying the analogy is a general statement that holds for natural sciences, mathematics, and jurisprudence, as well as for ideal language philosophy: They apply constructed languages, and many of their concepts are explicata for the explicanda of ordinary language. Even if a word occurs in both constructed and ordinary language, it will therefore typically have different meanings in each. For this reason, Carnap and Popper can dismiss Naess's experiments on ordinary language as irrelevant to Tarski's explication of 'true', and ideal language philosophy can be pursued largely independently of the results of contemporary experimental philosophy.

This dismissal of folk intuitions does not simply shift the authority to the experts' intuitions, though. Their intuitions about the application of an explicatum can be checked by using the rules for an explicatum's use, which must be laid down precisely. This was already remarked upon very early by Carnap (1967a, §100) in a discussion of the rational reconstruction of concepts in philosophy and the sciences:

> The fact that the synthesis of cognition, namely, the object formation and the recognition of, or classification into, species, takes place intuitively, has the advantage of ease, speed, and obviousness. But intuitive recognition (e. g., of a plant) can become useful for further scientific work only because it is possible to give, in addition, the indicators (of the particular species of plant), to compare them with the perception and thus to give a rational justification of intuition.

Experts' intuitions about how an explicandum should be explicated can be checked against Carnap's requirements for explication, and in principle, anyone may suggest and use a new explicatum according to expedience, as long as this new concept is clearly distinguished from existing ones.

Experimental philosophy is not useless for ideal language philosophy, however. To the extent that experimental restrictionism establishes actual disagreement in the application of concepts, it identifies areas where an explication is clearly needed, and experimental analysis can help by identifying an explicandum as a starting point for such an explication. In general, experiments on ordinary language can bear all the fruits for ideal language philosophers that Carnap (1955) lists in the quotation in section 2. Experimental philosophy is relevant for ordinary language philosophy, and to the extent that ordinary language philosophy is relevant for ideal language philosophy, so is experimental philosophy.

Ideal language philosophy can be challenged, of course. Kauppinen (2007, 96) and Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, 130) cut to the core of the debate between ordinary and ideal language philosophy when they echo the claim by Strawson (1963) that ideal language philosophy does not solve the right problems if it does not capture the concepts of ordinary language. However, first, the preceding discussion shows that even ordinary language and experimental philosophy may not capture ordinary language, and second, the responses by Bergmann (1949) and Maxwell and Feigl (1961) to Strawson's argument in the old debate within linguistic philosophy show that this may not be a problem in the first place. I do not want to claim that Kauppinen, Nadelhoffer, Nahmias, and Strawson are wrong. But I do want to claim that Nadelhoffer, Nahmias, and Kauppinen are jumping to conclusions, given that the discussion between ordinary and ideal language philosophy starts, but does not end, with Strawson's criticism.

4.   Final remarks

The conceptual conclusions of this paper are five-fold:

First, the results of experimental restrictionism and analysis show that ordinary language has the features that the ideal language philosophers conjectured in their criticisms of ordinary language philosophy. These results therefore support the criticisms' empirical premises. By establishing the divergence of intuitions, experimental restrictionism and analysis further undermine the status of intuitions as evidence for claims about ordinary language in particular, and the viability of ordinary language philosophy in general.

Second, the arguments and suggestions by ideal language philosophers about methods of ordinary language analysis support experimental philosophy. Mates's criticism of armchair linguistics and Carnap's approval of Naess's method of inquiry are cases in point.

Third, the results of experimental philosophy support linguistic philosophy. This is because the results of empirical restrictionism and analysis suggest that intuitions do not provide a means of reaching agreement on trans-empirical matters. Furthermore, experimental descriptivism may offer explanations of those cases where trans-empirical intuitions agree. So experimental descriptivism may come to support Feigl's criticism of the defense of trans-empirical philosophy by showing his empirical premise to be true.

Fourth, the defenses offered by proponents of ordinary language and trans-empirical philosophy fail to address the criticisms given by ideal language philosophers. Specifically, the defense of intuitions as a display of competence fails to address the difference between hunches and trans-empi-

rical intuitions. The analogical consideration offered in the introduction, when developed into an argument based on the use of explication, supports ideal language philosophy. And the defense of ordinary language philosophy that stresses Socratic dialogue makes ordinary language philosophy into a rough kind of ideal language philosophy without explicit goals.

Fifth, while the justifications of experimental and ideal language philosophy provide mutual support for each other, the two approaches are also, to a large extent, methodologically independent, so that ideal language philosophy can be pursued mostly without taking the results of experimental philosophy into account. Experimental philosophy is like any other empirical science in that its results cannot be shown false by suggesting new explicata (or, more generally, new constructed languages) and conversely, the constructed languages of ideal language philosophy cannot be shown wrong through the results of experimental philosophy.

These are the conceptual results. My historical point illustrates that the old debate about and within linguistic philosophy is extremely relevant for the current one, in that it anticipates some recent arguments, and even goes beyond the state of the current discussion in some respects. Some of the arguments brought forth may be decisive, but my quick overview cannot do justice to the sophistication of the old debate.

This relevance of the old debate, and indeed much of linguistic philosophy, has been questioned. In the context of the new debate, Knobe (2007, 120) argues in defense of experimental philosophy that the emphasis on "relatively technical discussions of questions about language and logic" in the philosophy of the 20th century, and especially the focus on "a relatively narrow range of problems involving logic, meaning and the extension of certain concepts", was "a catastrophic mistake". Instead, philosophers "should go after the traditional problems with everything we've got", where the "traditional" problems are those of human nature.

Of course, not all traditional problems concern human nature (questions about determinism and the fundamental constituents of matter come to mind). But even for those that do, it is not clear that they can be answered through experimental work alone. As Nadelhoffer and Nahmias (2007, 126, §2) state, "[i]n addition to reporting the results of their studies, experimental philosophers also explore background issues such as [...] the role that [intuitions] should play in philosophy [...] and what responses are available to theorists whose views do not settle with folk intuitions". The results of these explorations will not always be empirically testable themselves, and hence they are in the realm of linguistic philosophy, because, as pointed out above, linguistic philosophy is about the division of labor between empirical work and language analysis and reform; it does not ignore empirical work. In the

case of ideal language philosophy, this is especially obvious. Carnap (1967a, §§67, 122), for example, considers his constructional method for explicating all scientific concepts with the help of some basic perceptual concepts to be compatible with any empirical result about the nature of perception, and the explications he chooses are based on the psychological theories of his time. At most, there exists a terminological disagreement between experimental and ideal language philosophers over the methods that should be called 'philosophical'. As the quotation by Carnap (1967b) from section 2 shows, ideal language philosophers would not include any empirical methods in their explication of 'philosophical'; experimental philosophers would, obviously.

Knobe therefore goes wrong when he assumes that linguistic philosophy is only interested in questions about language. Its results are intended to be compatible with—and indeed complement—the results of the empirical sciences, even results like those that Knobe (2007, 121) reports:

> [T]he experiments seemed to be showing […] that moral considerations played a role even in the most basic concepts people used to understand their world. The implication was that people's ordinary way of understanding the world might turn out to be radically different from the sort of understanding we normally seek in the sciences.

This goes beyond, but is very much in keeping with, an earlier claim:

> We do not frequently assign qualities of emotions or volitions as properties to things in the outside world. This is due to the scientific orientation of our thinking, which affects us in this way, even outside of science, in daily life. We must assume, however, that to decline this assignment is only the result of a process of abstraction and does not hold from the outset. In the uncritical conception of a child, the apple does not only taste "sourish", but also "delicious" or even "like more". […] Furthermore, an apple looks "begging for a bite", a face looks "pushing for a punch", a noise is "to run away from", since these objects cause volitions of the appropriate kind.

Here, only children are expected to apply concepts that involve emotions or volitions to objects, while Knobe (2007) suggests that most people do. But the basic conjecture is nonetheless that the distinction between objective facts and affective judgments is the result of an abstraction, not a feature of our experience. And this is not Knobe speaking, it is Carnap (1967a, §133).[3]

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[3] Somehow, I find the German original (Carnap 1998) more delightful:

> Unserem wissenschaftlich geschulten Denken liegt es auch außerhalb der Wissenschaft, im täglichen Leben, fern, Gefühlsqualitäten oder Wol-

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lungsqualitäten den Dingen der Außenwelt als Eigenschaft zuzuschreiben. Doch ist zu vermuten, daß die Ablehnung dieser Zuschreibung erst das Ergebnis eines Abstraktionsprozesses ist und nicht von vornherein gilt. Für die unkritische, kindliche Vorstellung schmeckt der Apfel nicht bloß „säuerlich", sondern er schmeckt „lecker", ja er schmeckt „nach mehr"; […] ferner sieht ein Apfel „verlockend" aus, ein Gesicht sieht „zum Ohrfeigen" aus, ein Lärm ist „zum Davonlaufen", weil diese Gegenstände Wollungen entsprechender Art erregen.

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