

# ***A Study of the Admissibility of an Ambivalent Multi-subjectivity in Donald Davidson's Holistic Argument in Inclusivity of Language***

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**Abstract.** As one of the most prominent figure in linguistic and analytic philosophy, Donald Davidson's revolutionary reconceptualization on concept of objectivity and conceptual scheme has been conceived as substantial for epistemology, and it begs the need to explore further on what such revelation in the most profound epistemological concept could denote further. The paper then seeks to demonstrate that Donald Davidson's holistic argument for language inclusivity engenders, permits, and further pursues an ambivalent concept of multi-subjectivity, admitting it not only as a premise but also as a founding ground on which he built his philosophical proclamation. The paper would first introduce the main concepts that Davidson employs in his argument of conceptual scheme, as well as Davidson's general understanding of conceiving language as interdependent on local contextuality and dismissing an exclusive view on objectivity and subjectivity that precludes the possibility of a holistic understanding of knowledge; then it would continue the argument by analyzing the necessary antecedents and assumptions that Davidson employs in his argument. Thus showing that the premises are crucial in understanding Davidson's attitude toward knowledge in general as in they are deeply embodied in his theory instead of superfluous attached or inferred by fabricated reasoning. Moreover, the existent of the premises, in fact, denote a specific concealed understanding on epistemological agent within Davidson's framework that admit the ambivalence of multi-subjectivity: the epistemic agent that is the direct performing agent that convey and receive language while the evaluation agent designated to evaluate and analyze language reciprocally.

**Keywords:** Davidsonian Holism, Subjectivity VS Objectivity, Inclusive View of Language, Multi-subjective Agency, Conceptual Scheme

## **1. Introduction**

As one of the most prominent figures, Donald Davidson's revelation on objectivity has been tremendously influential within the analytical philosophers. Commencing with such acclamation is an intensified need to beseech for a new understanding of the relationship between the traditional subjectivity-objectivity binary trope [1-6]. This paper then aims to suggest that Davidson's

conceptualization of objectivity denotes his crucial predisposition toward an ambivalence multi-subjectivity—a coalesced embodiment by an evaluation agent and an epistemic agent. The essay plans to contend by first clarifying on key concepts Davidson deployed alongside with an introspect on the possible premises for which they communed as tangential; furthermore, from such resemblance the paper would deduce the predisposition that Davidson must also posit for subjectivity.

The paper would begin by introducing concepts in a causal sequence that are intrinsic to Davidson's penchant for an inclusive view of language, which promotes understanding that an agent admits mutual contextual independence and bases utterances on a broad, coherent system of beliefs, as opposed to an exclusive view, which posits restriction—utterances cannot be fathomed if they are systematically contradictory to what the agent considers coherent. Davidson, as the creator of the entire system, first fully acknowledged a semantic holistic perspective of knowledge that proclaimed an epistemological agent's interdependence in relation to individual pieces of meaning. Similar to Quine, Davidson repudiated any a priori—and by this he meant “independent from contexts” disregarding the sequential and temporal indictment that typically ascribed to this term—dogma or immutable and unassailable knowledge.

Then, on the ground of holistic approach, he introduces his argument on conceptual schemes and the incommensurability of language. Davidson fully admits the significant discrepancies in different conceptual schemes across cultures or theoretical frameworks. However in contending the incommensurability he rejects that the discrepancy blocks the possibility of any translation arrantly; rather if a language is truly not subject for translation, it wouldn't be recognized as a language at the first place.

He then furthers his refinement of the condition of such cross-scheme translation with concept triangulation which upholds on three main stances: speaker, listener, and the world. Understanding an utterance involves aligning the speaker's intentions, the listener's preassumed endorsement, and conceptual embodiment about the world. While triangulation denotes the stances, the Principle of Charity, while not implying blind and poignant acceptance, provides Davidson's practical guideline that in language, we assume the speaker to be rational, coherent, and pragmatically restrained from committing fallacy, or at least justified to some extent. With all of these ideas coming together, Davidson creates a caricature of objectivity and subjectivity that is dynamic and contextual rather than static.

For a traditional, prosaic, and entrenched binary understanding of subjectivity that focuses on its mercurial and capricious attribution, narrated as an almost apostate or renegade vacillation; it is also widely assumed that it is in stark contrast to objectivity that imposed a rigid stringent of necessity and ubiquitous unassailability and applicability. Thus, such a view on subjectivity while seemingly including ambivalence in its interpretation, in fact dismisses it utterly by being associated with the stance that is in controversy with objectivity—which by the same view, characterised as the epitome of rational pursuit. Therefore, the paper contends that by radically reshaping the position of objectivity, Davidson indeed imparts an alternative and dissented position for subjectivity that is compatible and justifiable with ambivalency and disunity of a singular identity.

## 2. Main argument

First of all, Davidson's holistic view, inextricably posits an oscillating agent that is subject to change, while not necessarily going as far as Quine's radical framework, Davidson's focus on interpretation grants leniency for multiple residence of an agent in the epistemic process—a pivotal intermittence that is further embodied by his view on conceptual schemes and incommensurability

of language. The allowance of proclaiming the validity of multiple conceptual schemes while acknowledging intertransmissibility is an assertion for diffused multi-subjectivity; however, it is critical to distinguish such an implication from a singular but multifaceted subjectivity that may appear intuitive to dwell in the scenario.

The key is the way Davidson conducts his incommensurability argument. He argues that the arrant block of translation is self-rebuttal—a similar Kantian argument approach—since the definition of incommensurability intrinsically entailed inconceivability. However, as Stroud has been numerously begrudged, the Kantian argument, although intuitional and astute, would be a remiss if failed to ruminate the impact of valuation agency on its truth value—what is meaningless does necessitates its invalidity. Davidson would also need to be aware of such predicament, thus, if he only deploys singular agent, he would have also faced intricacy on answering how come the agent is justifiably capable in proclaiming the inconceivability when it is not subject to the valuation agency—meaning that the agent is not itself capable of judging the inconceivable as invalid simply from admitting the meaninglessness of the inconceivable, which in this case, indicates the incommensurability of language.

On the other hand, he could circumvent and procure his argument by disclosing the multi-subjectivity in premises. That is to say, while it is impossible for an epistemic agent that is the direct conceiver and interpreter of language to evaluate the inconceivability of incommensurability of language, it is possible for an evaluation agent to conduct such justification on equating the meaninglessness and invalidity, because, as the holistic framework entailed, such evaluation agent is contextual interdependent, and thus a meaningless and thus not germane trope would not be incorporated with Thus, multi-subjectivity would be an adept suitor in permitting and vindicating Davidson's incommensurability argument.

To further suggest the applicability of such multi-subjectivity premise in Davidson's work, the paper would proceed in exemplifying this premise again by apprising the analyzation of Davidson's revealment in triangulation and principle of charity. With stark conspicuity, his distinction on the disparate roles of listener, speaker, and worldly context is permeable for promulgating multi-subjectivity. That is, by recognizing the role of listener and worldly context as separate, Davidson is already well aware of the distinction between an epistemic agent, the scenario listener, and the evaluating agent—the embodiment of the listener's worldly context. This manifestation is further established by the principle of generosity, in which Davidson peremptory argues the estimable efficacy of pre-contextual appraisal in language. The supposed preference for agreement and truth as an endorsement pertained, which would remain inexplicable and so debatable by the listener, would be rendered explicable by an assessing agent—the one in charge of the pre-contextual assessment..

Principle of charity, thus would not be so “boastful” in its validity as a rule of practical epistemic methodology if it is engendered by a singular agent for the listener alone would be, although in paucity but still to some extent, apprehensive with the speaker for the benefit of doubt, while a distinction in subjectivity and a displacement of worldly context by evaluating agent could sublate the perplexity for the listener and dissolve the benefit of doubt by the holistic discharge of independent context that is judgeable by evaluating agent—no need to doubt not because that it isn't but because it is not related and not reside on the web of knowledge. As a result, the critical pragmatic applicability for triangulation and the concept of charity in Davidson's theory supported an ambiguous multi-subjectivity premise. Thus, after discussing the fundamental wedges of Davidson's framework, it is safe to conclude that multi-subjectivity ambivalence is an important and admissible premise in Davidson's overview of knowledge and objectivity.

While the preliminary step of suggesting the admissibility of such multi-subjectivity is proceeding, it is also crucial to understand what is proclaimed when such methodology of understanding is surmised and embedded in his philosophical argument. Thus, what could be of a better exemplification if not other than the very writings on subjectivity by Davidson himself? In *The Myth of Subjectivity*, Davidson stated a rather intricate and unconventional definition of subjectivity that derides the private property that is embedded as intrinsic attribution within the entailment of the concept subjectivity adopted by most anti-realists who advocate for his main arguments delineated above. While anti-realist views vehemently opposed an independent facility for knowledge, they nevertheless claimed a basis of private mental experience that acted as a semantic antecedent to the positionality that is frequently inferred by subjectivity. To repudiate the validity of an extrinsic entity to be the source of the knowledge, anti-realists are bent and predisposed to proclaim as well the necessity of a validated agent—serving as the stance of an epistemological agency and thus subjectivity of knowledge. However, Davidson rejects such predilection and in fact willing to take it to the arbit that it would contend to be obnoxious for some anti-realists campaign that rooted for him. Rather, it appears necessary for him to distance himself from a traditional anti-realist precisely due to this divergent understanding of subjectivity.

For Davidson, subjectivity itself is not immune to the implication of inclusivity of language as a general framework, meaning that subjectivity should not be entitled with more than a simple particle that is conceived as the object of knowledge. What this means is that he refuses to give subjectivity any advantage that distinguishes it from other objects of knowledge governed by the inclusive perspective of language, which always denotes contextual interdependence. He then claims that subjectivity is indistinguishable from inter-subjectivity, which is a necessary manifestation of the agent that procured worldliness settings. That is, subjectivity cannot be contested without first taking into account many characteristics and contextual antecedents. Again, the study must define the distinction between multi-aspect singular subjectivity and multi-subjectivity, as both words appear to be compatible with Davidson's thesis. . However, it is important to notice that the former view is not necessarily incompatible with an anti-realist view for which the validity of a pre-knowledge entity still remains. However, Davidson rejects a thorough anti-realist claim stance precisely because of his disregard and rather compulsion for such premises. He does not consider such a sequentially discernible epistemological entity as valid as the triangulation suggests—the epistemological agent, both listener and speaker, exigent simultaneous and only as the scenery occurred and proceeded. To invoke a chronologically or semantically antecedent of the scenario is banished by Davidson's inclusive view of language. Thus as his willingness to compel even those who advocate for him just to make this discernment clear itself suggests how Davidson subtly values the ambivalency of multi-subjectivity in his framework. It further suggests the exigency, applicability, contextual relevancy, and thus the necessity of not only taking up multi-subjectivity as a premise, but a beseeched request from Davidson dedicating to prove and consolidate it.

### 3. Anticipate possible attacks

However, one could also reject the conclusion by surmising from two aspects: Attack on the process of reasoning claiming that the argument is not procured by Davidson's framework and is in fact superfluous and a remotely attached affinity to Davidson's framework that bears no significance as in it is not even refutable since it is so far off from Davidson's discourse; and attack on the argument itself claiming that the main claim fails to deduce efficacy and is a mere surmisation that in fact controvert to Davidson's premises and concepts.

The first criticism is significant since it casts reasonable doubt on one of the paper's fundamental argument approaches, albeit without mannered tacitness. The study does rely on the extrapolation of Davidson's original work to shed light on the examination of his concealed premises or application, and such a procedure by definition raises questions about its relevance to its source. With a concealed presupposition so cruel that it attempts to see Davidson's taciturnity as just a synonym for rejection. However, it is resolvable by demonstrating that, while Davidson did not explicitly address or dismiss it, he did not see the ambivalence of multi-subjectivity as irrelevant to his argument. It has been proven in above on how on some particularities Davidson would need to presume the multi-subjectivity instead of a complacent with a seemingly admissible singular multi-facet subjectivity is itself procuring the necessity of the paper's conclusion for Davidson's argument, regardless of his advertency. However, to further show the inextricable relevant nature of the multi-subjectivity ambivalence one could also refer to his opposing stance on the semantic relativism that by its definition presumed the stance of a singular aspect that is capable of possessing multiple positionality [7,8].

Richard Rorty is widely regarded as a relativist, but he claims to be ethnocentric. Rorty frequently sees himself in the same campaign as Davidson, while Davidson does his hardest to maintain distance [9]. Davidson gained an alternate sense of objectivity by distancing himself from a relativist claim that only positionality matters and determines. Davidson believes that objectivity and unity are distinct ideas, and that a discharge, or absence of traditional feeling of objectivity, is not mutually inconsistent with having an agreement, which relativists dislike.. That is to say, for an epistemological agent to be capable of conceiving any knowledge that is in the remote chance applicable to be deemed with objectivity in such stringent relativist sense, one has to be multi-facet while still procuring its own epistemological stance—to be a relativist is to uptake the possibility of a view from nowhere and thus enable the possibility for a view that is everywhere [10]. Namely, a process that both necessarily posits the singular stance's exigency, and the multi-facet nature it entailed epistemologically. Thus, it could be considered satisfactorily presented, by Davidson's earnest distrust towards such relativism prisms, that he himself strive and would regard the multi-subjectivity ambivalence as redoubtable in his theory although he did not addressed the exact words in the same manner this paper devoted.

On the other hand, the second attack on the argument itself would be comparatively less salient but more indexically and contextually bound and thus upholds a more consolidated ground. One may simply argue that, rather than serving as a necessary premise and current concern for Davidson's theory, multi-subjectivity ambivalence is incompatible and detrimental to it. A possible draft for this assault would be to allude directly to Davidson's rejection of a rigorous sense of objectivity. That is, by rejecting the narrative of a priori and immutable objectivity or rigid dogmatism, Davidson rejects the profoundness of embodiment manifested by the evaluating agent, which is substituted revealment by multi-subjectivity ambivalence as the worldliness contexts in triangulation. It is safe for simple worldliness context to devoid itself with the immutable stability however, for a multi-subjectivity perspective, the evaluating agent that distincts from the epistemic agent, it is necessary for it to be granted with some extent for immutability as to serve as a role of a knowing agent that entailed with the normative profundity. Thus, by fully and radically dismissing objectivity, Davidson also necessarily renounced the premise of multi-subjectivity ambivalence that engendered stability to objectified knowledge—the worldliness.

Such an attack on the paper's argument, although ept with a seemingly but specious by nature disguise on its efficacy, is essentially fallow by all means for it did not understand the stance Davidson is promulgating with his dismissal of objectivity. Is Davidson discarding objectivity

completely? It is true that Davidson's view of conceptual scheme demonstrates his distrust of a wholly anti-realist view of language while also conceding the overall weakness of the realist view, for which he repudiates its mental independent ground while hiding from agents. However, he may still be lenient on truth value in tandem with the conceptual system. Thus, his skepticism and reluctance to fully commit represents a desire to reimagine what objectivity means for him. Furthermore, his holism approach suggests a preference for language inclusivity, which denies a single meaning. As a result, he divides the ubiquitous character of objectivity into three distinct stances, depending on a posteriori premise that reduces its austere requirement. Then, despite seemingly repudiating objectivity to some extent, but as his hesitation in committing a full stance shows, that does not necessarily mean that he dismisses objectivity thoroughly, considering anti-realist for him is not the same as anti-objectivity. Thus, it could be contend, that Davidson is rather requesting a reimagination instead of a total abomination of rigid sense of objectivity and thus would not deemed the stability and coherency embedded in the evaluating agency, namely the worldliness context, as arrantly incompatible with his seemingly proclaimed demise of objectivity in exclusive view. Therefore, it is suggested that both attacks, despite its potency in themselves and the soundness of their concern, are essentially amiss in prevailing their aims and thus fails to invalidate the conclusion paper addressed.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, through a comprehensive introduction, a careful and scrutinized argument, and reassuring impregnable stance forestall against critical but availing possible attacks, the paper prevailed in achieving its goal and successfully proved that Donald Davidson's holistic argument in inclusivity of language engender, permit, and is in further pursuit of an ambivalence concept of multi-subjectivity. The conclusion, although light and wary in its claim, in fact foretold profound possibilities in further implications and potential philosophical revelations that could be enlightened through the deployment and revealment of this premise subtly disclosed by Davidson. For example, it may open up new methodologies for contemplating Kantian arguments that are structurally similar to conceptual scheme arguments, such as Stroud's transcendental argument and Putnam's brain in the vat argument—both of which could be comprehended more deeply if associated with a new understanding of the stance of subjectivity in their epistemology theory. Needless to add, it would be refreshing for the department to focus on topics other than philosophy, such as linguistics and social semiotics, for which a shift in perspective and the inclusion of a multi-subjectivity ambivalence would make the multi-agent evaluation eligible. The result reached by this research may only be regarded as a starting point for the wild expansion of agency.

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