REFERENCE AND SENSE
- two distinct ways of talking about the meaning of words
- talking of **SENSE**=dealing with relationships inside language
- talking of **REFERENCE**=dealing with relationships between l. and the world
by means of reference a speaker indicates which things (including persons) are being talked about.

E.g. My son is in the beech tree.

REFERENCE-relationship between the English expression ‘this page’ and the thing you can hold between your finger and thumb (part of the world)
your left ear is the **REFERENT** of the phrase ‘your left ear’ while **REFERENCE** is the relationship between parts of a l. and things outside the l.

The same expression can be used to refer to different things—there are as many potential referents for the phrase ‘your left ear’ as there are people in the world with left ears.

Many expressions can have **VARIABLE** **REFERENCE**
• There are cases of expressions which in normal everyday conversation never refer to different things, i.e. which in most everyday situations that one can envisage have **CONSTANT REFERENCE**.

• However, there is very little constancy of reference in l. Almost all of the fixing of reference comes from the context in which expressions are used.
Two different expressions can have the same referent.

Classical example: ‘the Morning Star’ and ‘the Evening Star’ to refer to the planet Venus.
SENSE of an expression is its place in a system of semantic relationships with other expressions in the language. One of such semantic relationships is sameness of meaning. We can talk about the sense, not only of words, but also of longer expressions (phrases and sentences).
In some cases, the same word can have more than one sense.

We use the term ‘word’ in the sense of ‘word-form’. (convenient to treat anything spelled with the same sequence of letters and pronounced with the same sequence of phonemes as being the same word). Some semanticists would regard ‘bank’ as several different words (different entries in dictionaries).

One sentence can have different senses as well.
Comparing sense and reference

- REFERENT of an expression is a thing or a person in the world
- SENSE of an expression is not a thing at all, but an abstraction
- difficult to say what sort of entity the sense of an expression is; intuitively- that part of the meaning of an exp. that is left when reference is factored out
Every expression that has meaning has sense, but not every expression has reference!
there’s sth. circular about the set of definitions in a dictionary. Similarly, defining senses of words often has this circular nature.

sth. semantically complete about a proposition, as opposed to the sense of a phrase or a single word.

Proposition=complete independent thought
No direct relationship between reference and utterance, but both referring and uttering are acts performed by particular speakers on particular occasions.
• Most utterances are accompanied by one or more acts of referring.
• Act of referring- picking out of a particular referent by a speaker in the course of a single utterance
• Mean/meaning/means/meant-sometimes used to indicate reference and sometimes to indicate sense