

LESSON FIVE

SENSE

There is a relationship between the world and the world of cognition. Every word of a language bears part of the perception of the people of this linguistic community, and this part is the word's sense. The sense of a word is the perception or the idea it evokes among the various ideas which words in a language can evoke. The sense of individual words come together to form structures of complex senses. Larger sense in sentence-sentence meaning, sense in context-utterance meaning. Sense is psychological-all factors that are brought together to constitute our perception of any word or object. Whichever approach we use will help us to land on the sense of the word. All these approaches operate at the level of the mind.

Sense describes. It defines.

Reference goes into the world of realities.

EXTENSION

The extension of every item is the set of all the individual elements which could be admitted as members of a class designated by that word. This property applies to all the items that have the attributes or componential features that characterise the sense of that word.

For e.g. the extension of a **woman** will include all the features;

+human

+female

+adult

Whether the person has a child or not, she will be included in the group of women.

Cars-all brands

Houses-all types

Presidents-all the presidents of the world

E.t.c.

We can talk of **community** and **individual** extension. This means communities as well as individuals can have their own extensions of items. For instance, an ambulance, a mini bus or any bus will be admitted into the extension of cars in Ghana, these will not be admitted as such in America or any other country. We would then say that car has a wider extension in Ghana than in America. (Americans do not add buses in the set of cars, rather vehicles).

We can still talk about **wide** or **universal** extension and **one-class** and **zero** extension.

For e.g., if we talk about presidents in Ghana, then we are talking about all presidents. This is a wide or universal extension.

When we talk of **one-class** extension, then we are talking about just one entity or one person at a time. For e.g. when we say president, we are in universal extension, but politically, when we say president then we are talking of just one person at a time. Again the U.N Secretary-General is a one-class extension because only one person occupies that position.

Zero extension is where we talk of the entity yet we can't see that entity. We say that entity has no physical membership. An example is the dragon

or the unicorn. We can't identify them with any group so we say the dragon and the unicorn have **zero** extension.

Extension can be very **contextual**. What we say about an entity and the how we say it will determine which group that entity should be accepted into. For e.g. when we say president, everyone knows we are speaking in a political context so presidents of clubs, associations and business presidents do not form part of this extension.

INTENSION

Intension refers to the qualities or features that define a predicate. These features can also be all the denotative and connotative and they can characterise all the referents or the extensions to which a term applies.

For instance, if we say

As **president**, you need to form your cabinet

I may mean

- 👤 a member of the class of president, and this is extension
- 👤 a person with the componential features or connotations of president which include:

- 👤 head of government and state
- 👤 responsibility for constituting cabinet
- 👤 responsibility for planning and executing programmes for a country

This is intension because it talks about the features of the word **president**.

On the other hand, if we say an African president, then we are looking at extension because we will be talking of any man or woman who is a president of any African nation.

One feature of extension is the **dynamism** of membership. African president means that though the personalities may change, the position still remains.

A word or predicate may have intension but no extension. An example is dragon.

Sometimes two different intensions may refer to the same referent or extension in the real world. If this happens, there is coincidence of extension. Though the extension is the same, the qualities or intension with which they are identified will vary with each intension. For e.g. soldier, father, tall man, E.t.c.

Soldier	Father	Soldier
+human	+human	+human
+male	+male	+male
+adult	+parent	+military training/enlistment

A soldier is not necessarily male, neither is he adult (because we have child soldiers), and again, that a father is a male and human but not necessarily adult. We confirm therefore that though the referents or extensions of tall man, father and soldier are the same in that hypothetical community, the features which make up each intension are different.

The Relationship between Sense/Reference and Intension and Extension

The two pairs of concepts are very closely related.

● Both sense and intension operate at the level of the mind-they are psychological. However, every word has a sense, not every word has intension. We cannot easily see the meaning of conjunctions, prepositions, e.t.c. This is because these do not generally have their meanings independent of the sentences in which they occur. So long as these make input to the meaning of a sentence, we say they have sense. Intension is however restricted to referring expressions.

● Both sense and intension form the basis for the identification of objects in the real world-whether as reference or extension. We need to have a concept of what we are talking about to be able to identify it. E.g. man. If you don't know what it is, how will you identify it?

● Both sense and are general and are beyond the description of specific items, especially if the items are seen as members of a class. Sense, as well as intension is arrived at by considering the attributes or features of all the members which constitute this class.

● Both reference and extension are physical manifestations of a sense or intension. However, whereas extension refers to all the members which can be designated by a word, reference refers to the members of this extension which are being designated or referred to at each context in which the word has been used. For e.g.

The student must study hard to pass his exam.

The student has the extension of all people who are under instruction in sec. sch or university. However, if we were talking about a particular university, only students of that university would form reference of **the student**. If we were talking about a particular student who failed his

exams, then this student would alone be the reference of **the student**, and not the many others who are part of this extension.

Extension-members who can be included in the general class while

Reference- members or member out of the others who are being pointed to at any particular time.

Summary

Cognition is the basis for meaning and communication.