

# Denotation, Sense and Reference

Presented by the Psychopathlinguists

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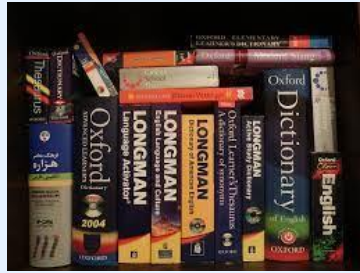


# Denotation and Connotation

# Denotation Specify Denotation

- Literal or primary meaning of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that the word suggests
- Conceptual meaning
- Derived from Latin word “dēnotāre” which means “to mark out”

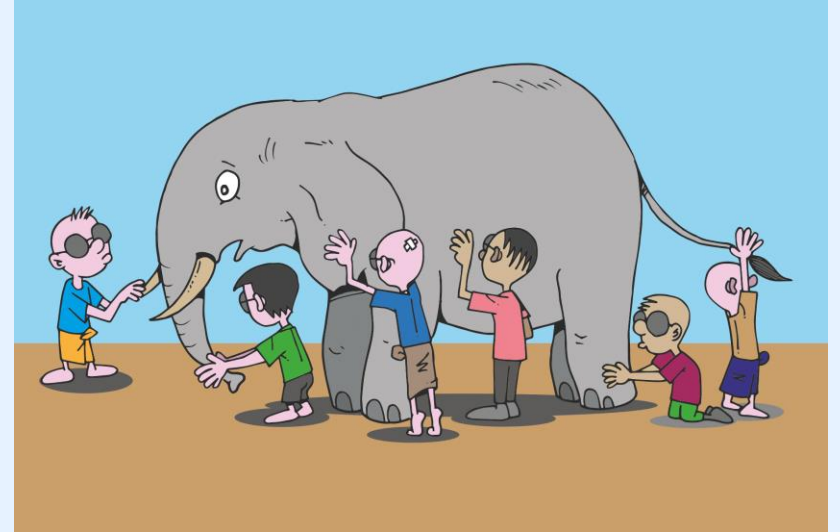
What is a cow ???



“bovine”



“equivalents”



“attributes”



“pictorial”

# Being a linguist, our goal is to ...

*\* Professor asks what is a machine ? \**

**SILENCER** : “Sir, machines are any combination of bodies so connected that their relative motions are constrained, and by which means, force and motion may be transmitted and modified as a screw and its nut, or a lever arranged to turn about a fulcrum or a pulley about its pivot, etc., especially a construction is more or less complex consisting of a combination of moving parts, or simple mechanical elements, as wheels, levers, cams etc.”

**CHANCHAD** : “Instruments that record, analyze, summarize, organize, debate and explain information; that are illustrative, non-illustrative, hard-bound, paperback, jacketed, non jacketed, with foreword, introduction, table of contents, and index; that are intended for the enlightenment, understanding, enrichment, enhancement and education of the human brain through the sensory route of vision... sometimes touch.”

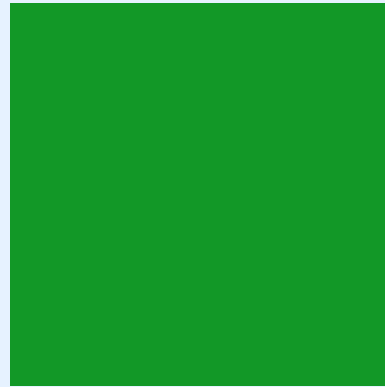


# Denotates

Green is the color between blue and yellow on the visible spectrum. It is evoked by light having a dominant wavelength of roughly 495–570 nm.  
- Wiki

+ colour  
+ #008000 (hex)  
+ rgb (0,128,0) (dec)

green



# Connotates



Nature



Greenhouse



Reduce  
Reuse  
Recycle

# Connotation

- “Real world” emotion one associates with an expression when one uses or hears it
- Emotive meaning



Causes of 1857  
rebellion in India



Naamdaar      नामदार  
Rashtravaad      राष्ट्रवाद

Although same denotations ...



This coffee has a nice “stench”

Iron – wiled      +ve  
Pig – headed      -ve

employ      +ve  
exploit      -ve

In Tamil :

1. அம்மா – Mom (Am'mā) connotation : love  
தாயார் – Mother (Tāyār) connotation : respect

2. மாளிகை – bungalow (Māḷikai) → +ve  
வீடு – house (Vīṭu) → neutral  
குடிசை – hut (Kuṭicai) → -ve

# Reference and Sense

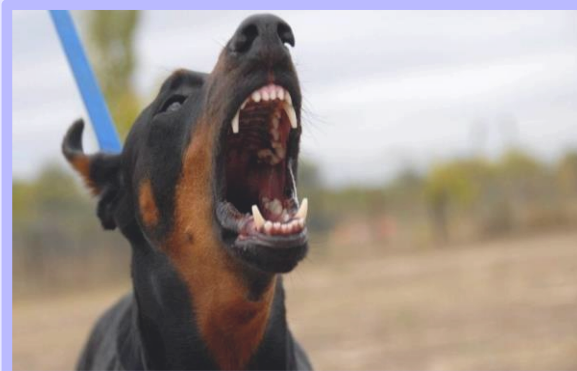


# Reference vs Sense

**Reference** of a word is the relation between the linguistic expression and the entity in the real world to which it refers.

**Sense** refers to how we see an object or the amount of information given about an object or the mental image being formed about it.

**Example** - उस कुत्ते से सावधान ।  
Here , कुत्ते being the linguistic expression has a reference to a real world animal.



**Example** - उस कुत्ते से सावधान ।  
Here , on hearing the word कुत्ते we have a sense of that word as the animal on the left.



# Some observations...

- All words with sense may not have a reference! For example, प्यार, इज्जत have no physical representation
- Single word may have multiple references, as well as multiple senses. For instance, उल्लू can refer to a person – in the sense that they stay up late or are silly. It can refer to a bird – more specifically, a nocturnal bird that looks like:



I bet I'm less of a night owl than you IllTians!

# A famous puzzle

- Hesperus (the evening star) is Hesperus.
- Hesperus is Phosphorus (the morning star).
- They both make the same reference, and are both correct, so do they mean the same thing? No. This led to the concept of sense.
- Hesperus and Phosphorus both refer to Venus, but differ in sense.

You think I look pretty? Wait till you check out my Sulphuric Acid clouds! Never go for looks alone, boys!



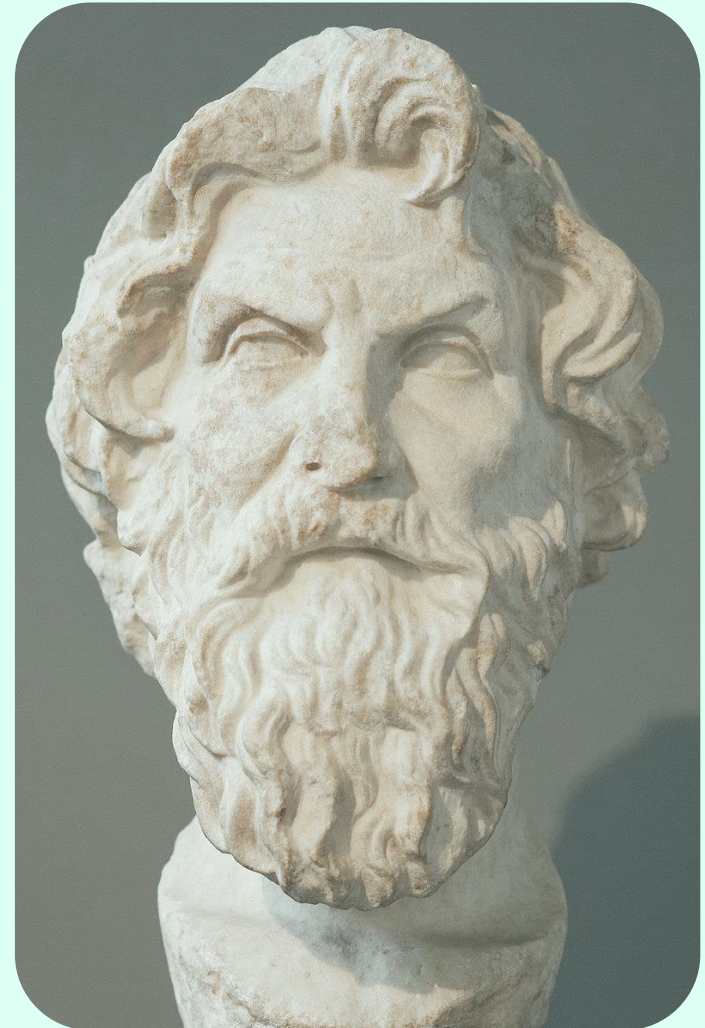
Similar examples in Hindi :  
परदा , खाना

**Blasts from the  
past**

# 5<sup>th</sup> century BC: Antisthenes

- Disciple of Socrates
- Distinguished "a general object that can be aligned with the meaning of the utterance" from "a particular object of extensional reference."

I'd rather fall among korakes (crows) than kolakes (flatterers), for the one devour the dead, but the other, the living.

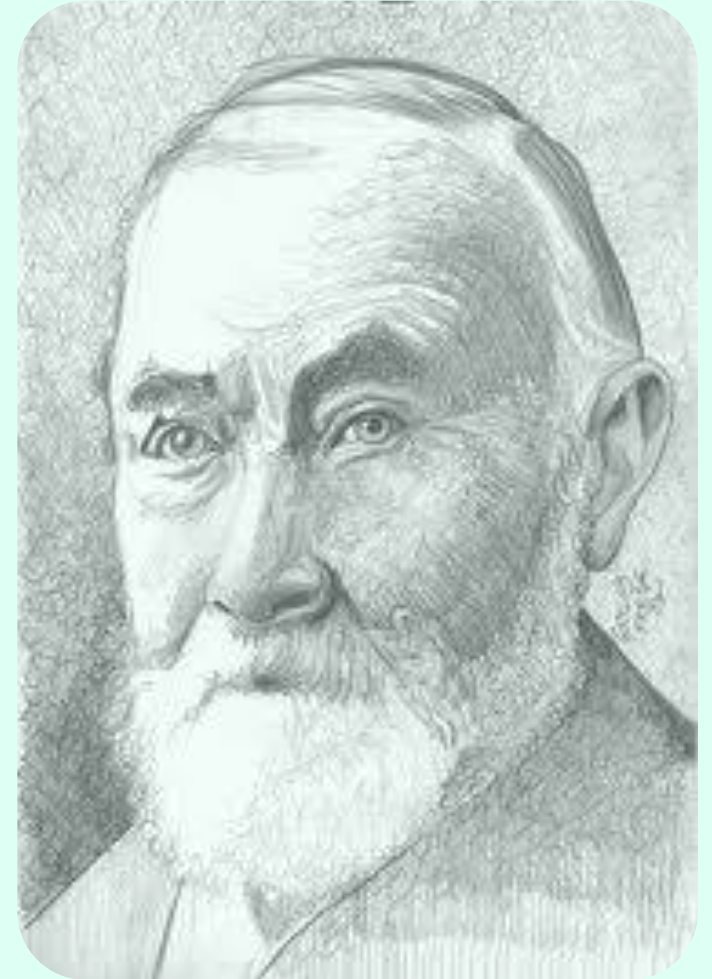




# Late 1800s: Gottlob Frege

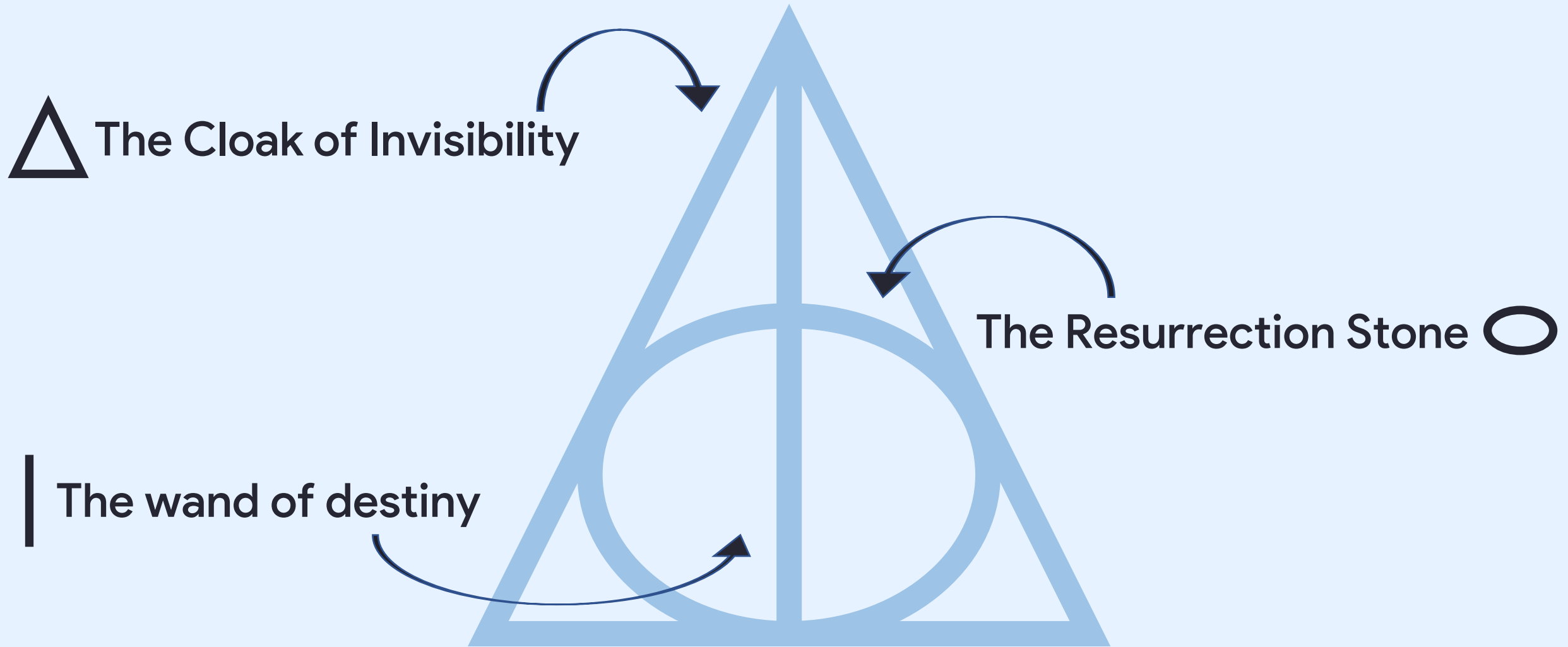
- Philosopher, logician, mathematician
- Wrote “Über Sinn und Bedeutung”
- Frege’s puzzles
- Linguistic turn in philosophy
- Description != name

Don’t idolize me just yet, folks. I opposed democracy and universal suffrage. I also wanted the French and the Jews to be deprived of rights and, preferably, thrown out of Germany.



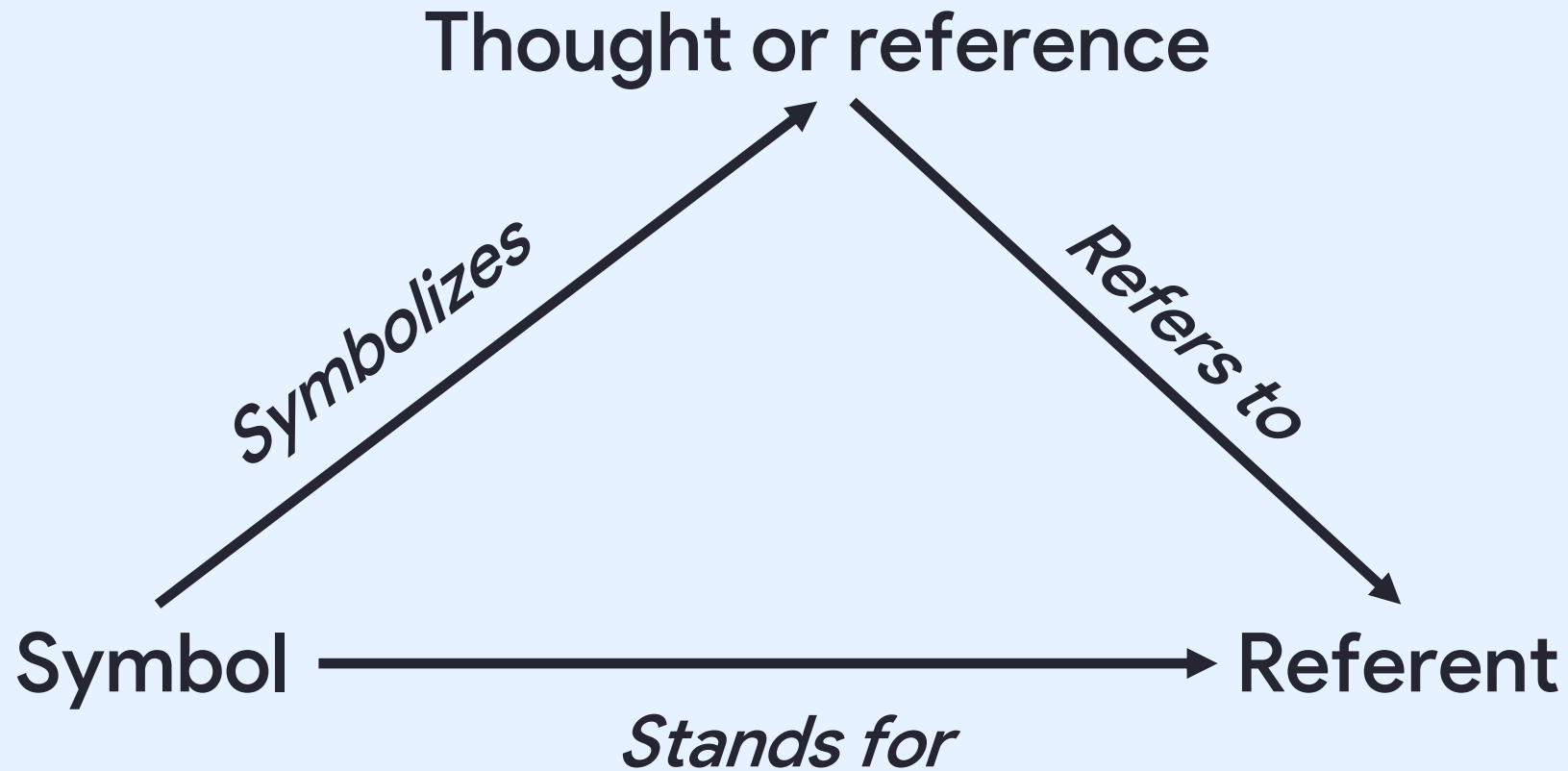
# The Semiotic Triangle

# A powerful magical symbol





# Relates symbols to meaning



# References

- Sense and reference - Wiki
- Frege's puzzles - Wiki
- Connotation - Wiki
- Denotation - Wiki
- Word sense - Wiki
- Reference - Wiki
- Triangle of reference – Wiki
- Semantics, the study of meaning – Leech
- Semantics – Saeed, Blackwell
- Semantics (vol1) – John Lyons

**Thank you!**