

# A Study on Translating Profane Terms in Literary Translation

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## Abstract

Profane Language can be described as unsophisticated, offensive language comprising socially unacceptable taboo terms that are often used to express anger. In almost every language profane terms are apparent. Profane language is a mixture of body parts, functions and products and quite often it is interlinked with the culture. They are used not only to express anger but writers use them as a technique to convey the reader of a certain character's social class. In translating profane terms translators often get confused. They think twice before translating them. Usually, translators tend to omit profane terms and in doing so consciously or unconsciously affect in altering the meaning of the original text. The objective of this study is to find an answer to the question "how to translate profane terms effectively instead of omitting?". In the process, the novel 'Senkottan' by Mahinda Prasad Masibula was used to extract data. A single paragraph consisting of several profane terms was given to five Translation Studies undergraduates to be translated. The source language was Sinhala and the target language was English. The students were encouraged not to omit any word in the process of translating. After analyzing the gathered data three effective methods to translate profane terms were identified. Direct translation, replacing the meaning with another word and translating the profane terms giving weight to the emotion and purpose behind it were the three methods uncovered in the process. Thus when the first and second methods failed the third method proved befitting in translation and can be regarded as the most comprehensive strategy.

**Keywords** - profane language, translation, emotion, purpose

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