

Challenges Posed by Connotative and Denotative Meaning in Literary Translation

P. G. D. S. Pallewatta¹
Department of Linguistics

Connotation can be defined as, the idea or feeling that a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning while denotation is the literal or primary meaning, of a word, in contrast to the feelings or ideas that the word suggests. Writers² use these interchangeably in writing novels to add beauty to the context. Most of the time, these two parts play a major role in imparting the very essence of a novel. Yet when translating a novel there is always the threat that if the translator fails to infer the meaning, the very essence of the novel will be lost. The objective of this research is to investigate the challenges posed by connotative and denotative meaning in literary translation? The main problem that led to the research is “what are the challenges posed by connotative and denotative meaning in literary translation and how to overcome them?” In the process twenty sentences comprising both connotative and denotative meanings were taken. The Source Language was English, and the Target Language was Sinhala. The sentences were given to Translation Studies Final year undergraduates to be translated. Students were encouraged to use dictionaries when necessary and were also asked to translate without omitting. A comprehensive discussion was held with the participants after analyzing the gathered data. It was then observed that a unique problem faced by all participants was in inferring the meaning of the connotative words and phrases and aligning them with the context. In conclusion, it can be said that by discussing with fellow translators, thorough knowledge of both the Source Language and the Target Language, analytical reading of the text, and comprehensive research before translating can help in overcoming the challenges posed by connotative and denotative words.

Key words: connotation, denotation, literary translation, source language, target language

¹ *siharapallewatta@gmail.com*