



The Hurdles of Denotation and Connotation to Non-Native English Learners

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Abstract— *The present study is an attempt to look for the problems of utilizing the same words with different meanings in various situations to express different attitudes by non-native learners of English language. The researcher has provided some examples about the everyday life throughout this article by referring to their different positive and negative and even neutral meanings. In addition, the researcher tries to explain some reasons which affect the difference between the surface and the intended meanings of words according to their usages in different situations.*

Keywords— *connotation, denotation, language, culture.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is constantly changeable and contextual. This is because of many cultural, emotional reasons and the arbitrary relations between the languages: between Arabic and English languages. In fact, communication and translation between two different languages with different cultural backgrounds is still a problem especially to those who study English language as second learners. Every nation and folk has its own habits, references by using object words or animal names or any abstract things and adjectives.

The reciprocal messages between the producer and the receiver: signifier and signified as mentioned by Mahasneh (2016) should be transferred honestly to another language even with their linguistic and semantic features. Translation according to Mahasneh (2016) can be defined “is a transfer process from a foreign language or a second language to another language”. Saussure is one those who emphasizes on the different between langue and parole and he finds language as a system of signs that expresses ideas. Langue is a linguistic competence that means language is an abstract system presented by one community. Parole is a linguistic performance that means language is presented by individuals acts.

Austin (1962) states that translation concerns totally with “parole” not with “langue” from the notion that language is not the means to say things but to do things. In one word or another, the interaction that has happened between interlocutors depends on many issues and how they actualize and alter the messages and codes according to the context.

II. CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

As we know, the meaning of words concerned with semantics is still a problem to non-native learners who depend on only the literal meaning and translating literally. Communication with others needs paying attention to the emotional and attitudinal sides. People can not deviate these concepts in spite they do so sometimes and put others or objects in merely logical judgements.

Connotation as stated by Azher (2019) refers to different cultural, emotional and social references whereas denotation refers to limited literal meaning of words which can be found in formal texts and dictionaries. By these definitions, we can say that connotation is the subjective meaning of the words which relates to the individuals' experiences or attitudes while denotation is an objective one which deals with general and formal meanings of

words. As a result of this, connotation may have positive and negative references whereas denotation has not.

III. CULTURE AND BOTH NOTIONS: CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

Nida (1964) states that culture and language are terms which can not be separated which means the learners should put in their heads when they are studying another language they have to learn its culture with in its grammatical and linguistic features side by side. Culture is defined by many linguists as it is the shared issues, behaviours, strategies, beliefs and standards by a set of people living in the same community.

Language concerning culture is a way of accessing all what others bring up to other communities and cultures. The comprehension of both cultural languages plays a crucial role in acquiring the target language perfectly.

What is important to mention here is if learners want to be professionals, they are in needs to have the capacity of decoding and encoding messages well between their mother language and the target language. Also, they should have the innate of guessing what the target of the producer or the recipient's aim during their conversation.

IV. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONNOTATION AND PHONOLOGICAL EFFECT

Garza (1978) and Rossier (1979) stated that the German grammarian Karl Otto Erdmann was the first one who had recognized between "Hauptbedeutung", "Nebensinn" and "Gefühlswert" and Urban. Lateron Ogden and Richards

insetted these two terms into the speaking English-world and united them into one term denotation and connotation.

Also, one of the prominent who thought that the meaning may be different from the surface meaning and have another supposed one in nature was Erdmann. Nowadays these two terms or notions are amalgamated.

The world of communication has two faces: the conceptual or perceptual and the cognitive ones. The conceptual one has features whereas the other one: the cognitive face has the emotional features. Many attitudes prefer and find the cognitive face is more significant emotional one but still these two notions still co-occur side by side because language is not an abstract thing people the do with no emotion and purpose.

Hjelmslev (1943) clarifies that connotation can be determined by disciplines like pronunciation, gender, etc. Sonesson (1989) explains for example that /r/ can be pronounced in different ways. Some pronounce it with the tip of the tongue and others are not. Every way of pronunciation of /r/ stands for a special kind of purpose.

V. EXAMPLES OF WORDS BY REFERRING TO THEIR CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION

Most of words in every language may have more than one referent positive, negative and sometimes neutral meanings. Jacobson (1959) was one of those who preferred to use two dictionaries the bilingual and the grammar of the target language depending on the fact that language is not a set of an isolated units but it is a collection of companied units of messages.

Below a list of words that have two faces: positive and negative ones according to the context they are used in.

| No. | Words | Negative meaning | Positive meaning | Neutral |
|-----|----------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Blue | In blue mood | | Blue sky |
| 2. | Poor | Low class | | No money |
| 3. | Rose | | Beauty | Colour |
| 4. | Snake | Evilness | | Animal |
| 5. | Virus | Wickedness | | Disease |
| 6. | Broken | Heart | | Fractured |
| 7. | Refined | | Pureness | Refined oil |
| 8. | Slim | Skinny | Smart | |
| 9. | Dumb | Stupid | Silent | Lack the power to speak |
| 10. | Rabbit | | Speed | Animal |
| 11. | Cross | | Religion | Sign of fear |
| 12. | childish | | Age | Insult to others |
| 13. | Curious | Nosy | Knowledgeable | |



VI. CONCLUSION

Learning and translating another language is not an easy task to achieve as so many people think. Non-native learners are still the most puzzled ones if they do not go deeper and farther in the target language.

If they resist on the surface meaning of words they will lose their disciplines completely and can not be professionals later on whether in their jobs as teachers or translators.

People should put many facts in front their eyes that language is not a fixed and abstract thing. It is affected continuously by many issues which can not be limited by just these few papers.

Throughout this article, the researcher tries to shed the light on two important terms: connotation and denotation. One appears as opposite to another one but in fact they complete each other and as learners of foreign language they should not determine themselves with the surface meanings they gain.

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