

The influence of culture on literary translation of Japanese Language into Sinhala

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Language and culture are two inter-related fields. One cannot learn a language without its culture. It comes automatically with language studies. Therefore, learning a language is not the mere learning of letters, words and sentence patterns but learning a way of thinking, living, eating, dressing and all other cultural aspects of the native speakers. Language invariably becomes the medium of effective communication as people use language for sharing ideas. With the development of the field of applied linguistics, translation has become a very popular area in the world. The field of translation has number of categories such as technical translation, religious translation, legal translation, science translation and literary translation. Every such category of translation uses language and the translator should be competent enough to handle both source and target languages. However, when it comes to literary translations, the translator should be well equipped with the language and the cultural background of that particular language, because literature is not only the language but also encompasses culture. Therefore, knowing the grammar of a language is not a qualification to become a literary translator. In a literary piece of work, we found culture-bound terms (cultural words) which are very unique to that particular language. If there is a cultural word found in the source text the translator needs to find an equivalent for this word in the target language, or to find any other way of representing the meaning of that word without misleading the readers of the target language. It is not an easy task as culture differs from one to another. This research study is about the difficulties faced by the literary translators in translating the cultural words with special reference to the translated Japanese novels to Sinhala. Sinhala translators of Japanese literature have used three main techniques to translate the cultural words, namely, cultural equivalence, word to word translation and word substitution.

Key words: cultural words, literary translation, cultural equivalence, word to word translation, word substitution