

**Effectiveness of the Use of Dialects in Literary Translation  
(With Special Reference to the Sinhalese Translation of  
Earnest Hemingway's "Old Man and the Sea")**

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Dialects play an indispensable role in an effective translation. A dialect is a form of a language unique to a particular region or a social group. These social dialects spawn according to the social boundaries like profession ethnicity, race, religion or even gender and age, whereas regional dialects occur in relation to the physical barriers like geographical boundaries. In Sri Lanka several regional and social dialects are found to be in existence. Being an island, Sri Lankan coastal communities withhold a unique form of fishermen dialect based upon their lifestyle in the coastal areas. To present a successful literary translation to the readership it is a necessary skill for any translator to have knowledge of the cultural background of both SL and TL. The purpose of this study is to identify the effectiveness of using such knowledge of fishermen dialect in Sri Lanka with reference to the Sinhalese translation of Ernest Hemingway's "Old Man and the Sea". The terms related to the fishery industry were selected and analysed by comparing them to the terms in the original text. It was found that the use of fishermen dialect has contributed towards giving an authentic reading to the target readership. Further, this translation proved to be rather a remake of the original text than a word to word translation. Therefore, translators need an in-depth knowledge of the cultural elements in both SL and TL. An understanding about dialects and their effective use will therefore be of utmost importance to the success of a literary translation.

**Key words:** culture, dialects, literary translation, source language,  
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