



DENOTATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANING IN BODO LANGUAGE

Samaina Bala Brahma¹

Research Scholar

Bodoland University, Kokrajhar

Dr. Bhoumik Ch. Baro²

Bodoland University, Kokrajhar

Abstract:

Language is a means of communication consisting of sounds, words etc. A person can express his/her thoughts and feelings of mind without any hindrances in front of each other with the help of a language. Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics that deals with meaning of words and sentences. Meaning is the main feature in a language. It is the message conveyed by words and sentences through which human being understand each other. It is the main feature of a language to study in semantics. There are different types of meaning. Many linguists have classified meaning depending on various aspects. Geoffrey Leech classified meaning into six different types. Denotative and Connotative are two among them. Bodo is also language under the group of sino-tibetan. It has also different types of meaning and uses. In this study it is going to discuss about meaning in Bodo language, denotative and connotative meaning, its differences, classification and about reasons.

Keywords: Semantics, Meaning, types, differences, reason.

1. Introduction:

Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics that deals with meaning of words and sentences. Language is a means of communication consisting of sounds, words etc. A person can express their thoughts and feelings of mind without any hindrances in front of each other with the help of a language. Language is a composition of many words. If we add a group of words together, it becomes a sentence and if we add groups of sentences together, it takes the form of a language. People make a suitable sentence by combining words together in a structured way and express their feelings with each other. Meaning is the main feature in a language. It is the message conveyed by words and sentences through which human being understand each other. It is the main feature of a language to study in semantics. Many linguists define semantics with some perspectives.

According to George Yule, "Semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences."¹ Second, According to James R. Hurford, " Semantics is the study of meaning in language ²"

1.1 Data collections: Both primary and secondary data has been used for the study. For primary data questionnaires method and for secondary data, it is collected from different published materials such as books, journals, dissertations, thesis etc.

1.2 Methodology: In this study, analytical method is used as a methodology

2. Description:

Meaning is the most important and obvious feature of a language to study in Semantics. It exchanged messages conveyed by words and sentences while communicating each other through language. Meaning may take many forms. There are different types of meaning. Many linguists have classified meaning depending on various aspects. Geoffrey Leech classified meaning into seven different types. These are- Denotative or Conceptual, Connotative or Associative, Social, Affective, Reflective, Collocative and Thematic.

2.1 Denotative and Connotative meaning in Bodo

Denotative meaning means a literal meaning or dictionary meaning of a word which is used to denote directly without any emotions. For example,

The word 'Suima', which means dog in Bodo language is directly used to denote an animal having four legs, a tail and barks. If someone call Suima in Bodo language, the image of a dog is reflected in our mind and understands the meaning of word Suima. This is the denotative meaning of a dog in Bodo language. On the other hand, Connotative meaning means a meaning which denotes literal meaning of a word including secondary meaning. It has feelings, emotions and ideas through which people may connect with that word.

For example

i) The previous word 'Suima' denotes an animal having four legs, a tail and barks. But it has another secondary meaning in Bodo language. If we hear the word suima, an emotion or feelings of fear reflect our mind along with its literal meaning that it may bite or harm us. Apart from that, the word Suima (dog) is also negatively used to denote an evil person. That feeling of fear and another meaning is connotative meaning of Bodo word Suima.

ii) The word luwar and Bedlao, which means leech in Bodo language is directly used to denote a blood sucking worm. But there is a feeling of fear in our mind that such types of worms may suck our blood. This is connotative meaning.

2.2 Types of Connotative meaning in Bodo language

Many linguists have further subdivided connotative meaning into three types. These are- positive, negative and neutral.

¹ Yule, George. The study of Language; fourth edition, p112

² Hurford, James R. Semantics a Coursebook; second edition, p1

- (I) Positive: If a word having a connotative meaning in a language expresses a positive feelings and emotions then it is known as positive connotative meaning. For example- the word 'Bik^ha', which means heart in Bodo language has a positive meaning. The word Bik^ha is directly used to denote heart. But it has connotative meaning of love or affective for someone, which indicates a positive feeling.
- (II) Negative: If a meaning of a word in a particular language expresses a negative feelings and emotions it is known as negative connotative meaning. For example, the word 'Zubt^hesali', which means jail in Bodo language has negative connotative meaning. Its denotative meaning of Zubt^hesali is a place of confinement of people where criminals are kept to punish. If someone says the word zubt^hesali, a negative feelings or an emotion of crime comes to our mind.
- (III) Neutral: A word's meaning having neither positive nor negative connotative meaning in a particular language is known as neutral. For example, the word nɔ which means house is neither positive nor negative and has a neutral meaning.

2.3 Difference between denotative and connotative meaning in a language:

There are many differences between denotative and connotative meaning. These are-

- i) Denotative meaning denotes only a literal meaning or dictionary meaning of a word without any emotions. But connotative meaning denotes secondary meaning of a word with feelings and emotions. For example, 'Bibar' means flower in Bodo language. It has connotative meaning of love, pleasure, joy etc.
- ii) Denotative meaning is static. But the connotative meaning is not static. It changes and extends with the changing nature of time, environment and society. For example, the denotative meaning of word 'bɔma' is a device which explodes and destroys a large area. It is a static meaning of bɔma. On the other hand it has various connotative meaning based on time, situation and society. Fear is one of the connotative meaning of bɔma. It also denotes meaning of hurting someone's emotions through abusive words. Besides that with time, situation and acceptance of society now bɔma also denotes connotative meaning of fart.
- iii) Denotative meaning has only one meaning but connotative meaning may have more than one meaning. For example, the word 'Suima' which means dog in Bodo language is directly used to denote a four footed animal which barks. But the connotative meanings of word Suima is fear, insulting someone, rude etc.
- iv) Denotative meaning of a particular word is narrow, but the connotative meaning has broad and wide meanings. For example, the word 'Bik^ha' which means heart in Bodo language is directly used to denote an organ of the human body that pumps blood throughout body. But it has broad connotative meanings like kindness, love, care and so on.
- v) Denotative meaning has no other classifications, but connotative meanings can be classified into positive, negative and neutral.

2.4 Reasons for connotative meanings

I) Impact of the Speaker: Connotative meanings depend on the speaker with time, situation and environment. There are various reasons for connotative meaning based on the impact of the speaker. These are:

a) Age: Sometimes denotative and connotative meaning can be different based on different age groups. It means a word's connotative meanings may mean different for different age groups. For example, the word 'la' in Bodo language directly means to take something, but youths in present days understand the word la as taking some intoxicants. For example-

i) dinui bohaba lahuisuilai tuu.

ii) nuṛ laya nama?

In the above sentences, the word 'la' has been used as to take some intoxicants. The young generation generally uses this type of meaning now a day.

b) Education: Education is also one of the reasons for various connotative meaning. Connotative meaning of a word can be different for educated and uneducated people. For example, the word Doctor is understood by educated people as different kinds of doctor which reflects in his mind as Skin, Dentist, ENT and so on. But the word Doctor for uneducated people means just a person who treats or cures illness.

II) Time and Situation: Time and situation are also reasons for various connotative meaning. One of the unique characteristic of language is that no language is static. It can be change from different angles or aspects. Meaning is also like that. It can change or extends with time and situation. For example, the word 'bōma' which dictionary meaning is a device which explodes and destroys a large area. Fear, worry, panic etc are connotative meaning of it. But now a day's connotative meaning of bōma also hurting someone's emotions through abusive words, making quarrel between two people. Besides that, today's new generation use bōma word to compliment someone's look.

Findings: The following points are the findings of the discussion. These are-

i) There are many words having denotative and connotative meaning in Bodo

ii) Denotative meaning has no classification but there are three types of connotative meaning

in Bodo. These are- positive, negative and neutral.

iii) There are many differences between denotative and connotative meaning.

iv) In Bodo language there are many reasons behind connotative meaning. These are- impact of the speaker like age, education, time and situation.

3. Conclusion

The above discussion has addressed meaning, their types and about denotative and connotative meaning in Bodo language briefly. It is known that in Bodo language there are many words having both denotative and connotative meanings. The denotative meaning is directly used to denote only dictionary meaning of a word,

but connotative meaning has a wide range of meanings depending upon the nature, time and environment which is not static or fixed. The denotative meaning has no classification but connotative meaning has three types of meaning in Bodo language because it is not static. It changes with the changing nature of the society.

References:

1. Basumatary, Phukan Chandra. *Raobigianni Phora*, Nilima Prakashani, Barama:Baganpara,2017
2. Deka, Dr. Anup kr. *A Brief Introduction To Linguistics & Sociolinguistics*, Ashok Publication, Panbazar, Guwahati-1, 2018
3. Hurford, James R. *Semantics a Coursebook; second edition*, United States of American: Cambridge University Press, 2007
4. Lyns, John. *Language and Linguistics*, Cambridge University Press,2017
5. Yule, George. *The study of Language; fourth edition*, United States of American: Cambridge University Press, 2010

