Challenges in Translating Registers with Special Reference to Sinhala, Tamil, and English Languages

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No two languages are ever similar owing to their unique characteristics. These language diversities have made the communication process complex but alive. Translators play a vital role in enabling the communication process of two different language communities. The study discusses the definition and categories of language registers, using the widely used three languages of Sri Lanka. The primary purpose of the study is to identify the issues that those registers bring out if they exist and then find out feasible solutions to them according to the perception of the sample group which consists of 25 government translators. While questionnaires and interviews are used as the primary data collection method, online sources and books are used as secondary sources. When analysing the data, it is found that the majority of translators struggle when translating registers, especially in literary texts. For example, when translating "intimate registers" to a target Sinhala reader, the translator struggles because it is very hard to present sex-related incidents in Sinhala. This struggle is clearly visible in "වැට්ර්ලි ආර්යාවගේ පෙම්වතා", work of D. H. Lawrence translated by Shamel Jayakody. The results of this study further emphasize that for translators, registers can both be a blessing and a curse. In conclusion, the study recommends the translators to have a sound knowledge about the registers of both languages he or she is dealing with to provide the target reader with what he or she expects.

Keywords: Registers, challenges, translation, target reader