

CONNOTATIVE AND DENOTATIVE MEANINGS OF WORDS

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Annotation

Connotations are important when you communicate with people. A language, in itself, is subjective in nature and it can evoke different psychological reactions from different people. That is why using the wrong words can totally ruin communication even if your intent and ideas were correct and trustworthy. Denotation simply refers to the meaning of a word. That is, denotation is the actual meaning of a word without any reference to any associations or emotions of the word.

Key words: Connotation, denotation, emotional, literal, communication, formal, informal, positive, negative, neutral.

Denotation and connotation are not two distinct concepts or signs. The connotative and denotative meanings of a word coexist with one another as two aspects/elements of a sign. Connotation is a term used to describe the many social connotations, cultural allusions, or emotional connotations attached to a symbol. The denotation of a sign is its overt or implicit meaning. The term "denotation" relates to a word's dictionary definition, or its literal meaning. Diction, a component of style, describes the language authors employ to convey their thoughts. When words express more than just literal, precise meanings, they are said to "connote" or "suggest" additional meanings and values not covered by the definitions found in the average dictionary. Those words that are often employed and understood by the users and the audience to designate an object or class of objects, an act, a trait, or a concept are said to "denote" a core meaning. However, over time, due to usage, words that roughly represent the same thing may come to have additional connotations or meanings that are either positive (meliorative) or negative (pejorative). Liberal, diversity, team player, right wing, follower, minority, feminist, left wing, abuse, conservative,

motherhood, rights, relationship, family, peacekeeper, and comrade are just a few words that have changed during the course of the 20th century. You must first comprehend the meaning of the word "denotation" in order to fully comprehend connotations. Simple denotation refers to a word's meaning.

Denotation, then, is the literal meaning of a word without consideration of any connotations or feelings the term might evoke. For instance, the meaning of the word red is just the color red, but it also connotes danger or blood. Again, be careful because the dictionary occasionally provides multiple denotations for a single word. This typically occurs when a word is used in many contexts. For instance, the term "high" can mean a variety of things.

The adjective "high" denotes something that is "larger than average in number or size" or "of enormous vertical extent." The term "high" has the meaning of "a high peak, level, or figure" or "a successful time" when used as a noun. For another example of connotations, consider the following:

negative There are over 2,000 vagrants in the city.

neutral There are over 2,000 people with no fixed address in the city.

positive There are over 2,000 homeless in the city.

All three of these expressions refer to exactly the same people, but they will invoke different associations in the reader's mind: a "vagrant" is a public nuisance while a "homeless" person is a worthy object of pity and charity. Presumably, someone writing an editorial in support of a new shelter would use the positive form, while someone writing an editorial in support of antiloitering laws would use the negative form. In this instance, the dry legal expression "with no fixed address" quite deliberately avoids most of the positive or negative associations of the other two terms. A legal expert will try to avoid connotative language at all costs when writing legislation, frequently using archaic Latin or other obscure languages. French words that are not commonly used in spoken English and are therefore less likely to evoke strong feelings. Connotations are important in human communication. Language itself is inherently subjective and can provoke different psychological responses in different people. Because of this, even if your intentions and thoughts are correct and credible, using the wrong words can completely ruin your communication. The words you choose can make a big difference in the meaning of a sentence. Therefore, you should fully understand both the literal and implied meanings of



various words before using them. An implication expresses emotion and can be positive, negative, or neutral depending on the context. Positive connotations lift people up. Negative connotations evoke sad or negative psychological feelings. Finally, neutral connotations have no emotional response. The use of a particular implication depends on the context or type of communication. Authors may deliberately use words with negative connotations to achieve the desired effect. Implications may be formal or informal. You can use informal and informal language with friends and relatives. Business communication, on the other hand, should always be formal and neutral.

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