

## Conference Paper

# Denotation and Connotation in Korean Drama Titles of 2019-2020

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**ORCID:**Friska Pakpahan: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0906-4110>**Abstract**

The research aimed to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings in Korean drama titles. The titles were chosen from the popular dramas of 2019-2020 based on Netflix and Forbes Magazine. This study was focused on finding the real meanings behind the titles. The study was done qualitatively by randomly selecting 20 Korean drama titles of 2019-2020. Connotation and denotation are parts of describing the meanings of words. Connotation refers to the implied meaning of a certain word, while denotation refers to the real meaning of a word or, simply said, is the dictionary meaning. The titles of the Korean dramas were not presented in the real sense, but there were other references or implied meanings behind all of the titles. This was so because a title is designed to be eye-catching, a term that is usually used in marketing. Furthermore, those implied meanings in the titles of the dramas were presented in such a way as to arouse emotion.

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## 1. Introduction

Connotation and denotation are parts of describing the meanings of words. They are two principal methods in getting meaning in language, and language itself is symbolic that is used to represent ideas, objects, and feelings, meaning that there is always an interpretation of meaning in all elements of language. Learning language is not simply a matter of learning words. It is a matter of correctly relating our words to the things and happenings for which they stand. It is the need of knowing how meanings of words vary from one cultural context into another. We can interpret any given statement in more than one way. Most of the words do not simply express a thought, but also express feelings beyond the word's literal meaning. Denotation and connotation are two ways that we need to interpret the words into their meanings.



Word is a form of expressions that has meaning. People sometimes have their own words to express something special for them, they create several words with particular meanings. There are two types of word meaning, the first type is conceptual or denotative meaning and the second one is connotative meaning. Denotative meaning is a meaning that does not contain any other meanings or values and it is based on dictionary meaning. On the other hand, connotative meaning is meaning with additional value or sense which is indirect and unreal (Saifuddin, 2018). In addition, denotation is the literal meaning or linguistic meaning of the expression, and connotation is the contrast of denotation which means about social and affective meaning. Therefore, a word may have more than one meaning in its limitation that express people's thought and feeling beyond the literal meaning (Rao, 2017).

## 2. Literature Review

The denotation refers to the most basic or specific meaning of a word. On the other hand, a connotation is an idea that is suggested by or associated with a word. In literature, connotation paves way for creativity by using figures of speech like metaphor, simile, symbolism, personification. Connotation and denotation are not two separate things/signs. They are two aspects/ elements of a sign, and the connotative meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings. Connotation represents the various social overtones, cultural implications, or emotional meanings associated with a sign. Denotation represents the explicit or referential meaning of a sign. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the 'dictionary definition.' Generally words can be used for positive or negative connotations depending on the contextual situation. The usage of words may be good or bad sense, impression, experience, and feeling. For example, politicians and advertisers may prefer words with positive connotations in view of expressing their message attractively. In case of unpleasant feeling, a word with negative connotations may be used to describe them. The denotation of a word is its primary signification or reference; its connotation is the range of secondary or associated significations and feelings which it commonly suggests or implies. Thus "home" denotes the house where one lives, but connotes privacy, intimacy, and coziness; that is the reason real estate agents like to use "home" instead of "house" in their advertisements. "Horse" and "steed" denote the same quadruped, but "steed" has a different connotation that derives from the chivalric or romantic narratives in which this word was often used.

Shobur in Saifuddin (2018) states that there are some levels of the relation between signifier and signified called 'staggered systems. The two of levels are denotation and

connotation. Denotation is a level of sign explaining the correlation between signifier and signified in which the sign produce the explicit, direct, and real meaning. Whereas, Connotation is a level of sign explaining the correlation between signifier and signified in which it is explained an implicit, indirect, unreal meaning. Denotative meaning is the first order meaning which is objective that can be given to symbols. It is by linking directly between the symbols with a reality or the designated phenomenon. Then the meaning of connotation is the second order meaning that can be given to symbols with reference to cultural values that are therefore on the second level.

Denotation is the dictionary definition, a word's literal meaning only. Not emotions or feelings are associated with the word. For example, "the teacher walked into the classroom". This example does not have any hidden meaning. A teacher simply walked into a classroom. Connotation is a word's emotional meaning, suggestions and associations that are connected to a word. Words can be positive, negative, or neutral. Words can also connote specific feelings or emotions. For example, "The smiling educator strolled into the peaceful classroom". All words connote a kind, happy teacher and environment.

Denotation and connotation are terms describing the relationship between the signifier and its signified, and an analytic distinction is made between two types of signified: a denotative signified and a connotative signified. Denotation tends to be described as the definitional, literal, obvious or common-sense meaning of a sign, meaning that denotative meaning is what the dictionary attempts to provide. Separating grammatical denotation from connotation is important because while one might assume that a word's denotation is fully intended, whether a word's connotations are intended is much more difficult to determine. Connotations are often emotional in nature, and thus if they are intended, it may be for the purpose of swaying a person's emotional reactions rather than the logical evaluation of an argument. In the denotation meaning, it will be found the meaning of the title based on dictionary, while the connotation meaning it will be found a word's emotional meaning, suggestions and associations that are connected to a word.

Relevant studies are used as the references to conduct the research. First, a study conducted by Rao, (2017), "A Brief Study of Words Used in Denotation and Connotation". He conducts the study to explains how denotative and connotative meanings of words used in English. Connotation and denotation play a vital role in learning language and comprehending literature. Words can be used for positive or negative connotations based on the context and need.

Second, a study conducted by Sakina, Fauzah (2020), "The denotative and connotative meaning in Sheila on 7 song lyrics "Film Favorit". They conduct the study to give

some theories and knowledge specifically in meaning of the signified and signifier using Roland Barthes Semiotics theory.

Third, a study conducted by Ariyadi (2014), “Denotative and Connotative Analysis on the Advertisement of New Axe Provoke Even Goddesses Will Fall Version.” He conducts the study to analyze the advertisement with Mythology.

Fourth, a study conducted by Saifuddin (2018), “Denotative and Connotative Meaning of Signs in Lombok Musical Instrument (*Gendang Beleg*)”. He conducts the study to describe and analyze connotative meaning of of signs in Lombok Musical Instrument (*Gendang beleg*). The researcher divides the data into two parts which are primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of magazines, books guide, and the data from internet and the result of interview. The method used in this study is qualitative.

Fifth, a study conducted by Zuhdah (2019), “An Analysis of Denotation and Connotation in Chairil Anwar’s Poem.” He conducts the study to investigate denotative and connotative meaning in words. Both of denotation and connotation are helpful for readers of poetry to find the interpretations and implied meaning. This analysis focuses on meaning of words taken randomly from a poem. The data are analyzed descriptively using Griffith’s concept about three stages of interpretation, there are literal meaning, explicature and implicature (Griffith, 2006).

In this study, the writer identifies and analyzes the denotation and connotation meaning in Korean drama’s titles. The titles of dramas can be in words or sentences. Every title has its meaning to deliver to the audiences. From the title there is a message to be conveyed, but to get the message we have to find the meanings. In this study, the writer will search the denotation and connotation. A drama title paints a picture worth a thousand words. Seriously, the name of a drama should sum up everything we need to know about a drama. There are some dramas, however, where the titles are not so clear cut. Whether it is a single word or an entire sentence, these dramas come with names that are subtle references or have deep meaning. We are not here to judge a drama by its name, but instead, we are shedding light on the real meaning behind these drama titles.

### 3. Research Method

This study were conducted by using descriptive qualitative method in which the purpose is to find out the denotation and connotation meaning in Korean drama titles. Qualitative research was related to assist in describing the common elements of the various forms of qualitative methods. Nazir (2014) says that descriptive qualitative is one which is used

to make descriptive of situation, event or accumulate the basic data. It means that this research did not intend to find a new theory but to find new evidence through the truth of certain theory. The researcher investigates the denotation and connotation meaning in Korean drama titles, then to see how the title draws attention of the audiences who see and read it, then want to watch it.

The data of this research are the titles of Korean Drama that are popular during 2019-2020 based on ranker of Netflix and Forbes site com. The data source are 20 titles of Korean dramas. Netflix is one of a famous streaming services that allows our members to watch a wide variety of award-winning TV shows, movies, documentaries, and more on thousands of internet-connected devices. Forbes is an American business magazine. It features original articles on finance, industry, investing, and marketing topics.

The data are analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method. The steps of the analysis include; downloading Korean Dramas Films that are popular during 2019-2020,, deciding which titles are to be analyzed randomly, after that searching the newest articles and journals to support the study; next, identifying the titles based on the denotative and connotative meanings. Finally, this study classifies the titles into denotative and connotative meanings

## 4. Result and Discussion

The fundamental goal of this study is identifying and analyzing the denotation and connotation meanings in Korean drama titles.

### 4.1. Analysis of Denotation and Connotation in Korean Drama Titles:

***Hotel del Luna (2019)*** is a drama released on July 2019. This drama is starred by Lee Ji-eun and Yeo Jin-goo. It tells about a hotel but the guests are ghosts, and the ghosts want to set themselves free from the hotel. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning is *An establishment providing accommodation, meals, and other services for travelers and tourists*. But in this title Hotel has a hidden meaning, it does not denote the real hotel to stay in. Del Luna: *Name of a hotel*. Hotel del Luna, *a hotel, provides accommodation for travelers and tourists*. **Connotation:** there is a hidden meaning from the title. Hotel del Luna connotes emotional feeling that is a place to stay in for the ghosts, not for us as human.

***Crash Landing on You (2019)***, released on December 2019. This drama is starred by Hyun Bin, Son Ye Jin, Seo Ji Hye, Kim Jung Hyun. It tells about a woman whose father is a very rich man in south Korea and lost in north Korea, and saved by a soldier from north Korea. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning is *an accident of vehicle bringing an aircraft down to the ground after a journey*, but there is a hidden meaning in this title. **Connotation:** Crash landing connotes an emotional feeling; a rich woman from south Korea falls in love with a soldier from north Korea.

***When The Camellia Blooms (2019)***, released on September 2019. This drama is starred by Gong Hyo-Jin and Kang Ha-Neul. It tells about a single mom struggling for his son alone. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning is *a beautiful flower camellia growing in East Asian*. There is a hidden meaning. **Connotation:** *When the Camellia Blooms* connotes a situation where *a single mom is like Camellia flower who is blooming/shining even though in her struggling to grow up her son alone*.

***Her Private Life (2019)***, released on January 2019. This drama is starred by Park Min Young and Kim Jae Wook. It tells about a fan of a band in Korea, really fascinating to the singer and creates a web for the band. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning is fully intended to show the ability to grow belongings to a particular person, not for public use. **Connotation:** *Her Private Life* connotes an emotional feeling, where a fan who really wants to know and to be involved with his favorite's band life.

***Sky Castle (2019)***, released on April 2019. This drama is starred by Yum Jung Ah and Jung Joon Ho. It tells about wives who stay in an elite area that is Sky Castle. All of them are getting obsessed to compete to be the best among them in their richness and success. **Denotation:** the dictionary meaning is *a large strong building with thick, high walls and towers in the space above the earth that you can see when you look up*. It is fully intended as a name of a location/building. There is hidden meaning in it. **Connotation:** *Sky Castle* connotes *a name of an elite area or resident, there is no hidden meaning*.

***Children of Nobody (2019)***, released on January 2019. This drama is starred by Kim Sun Ah and Lee Yi Kyung. It tells about a violence upon children. Then they are saved by a detective and a young lady who is like a crazy woman but not. **Denotation:** *A person of no importance or authority on a young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority*. There is hidden meaning. **Connotation:** *Children of Nobody* connotes a feeling where *human beings below the age of puberty always get violence from their parents, and are not given attention by their parents*.

***The Kingdom (2019)***, released on January 2019. This drama is starred by Kim Hye-Jun and Yoo Seung-Ryong. It tells about a King collapsed from an illness and no one

is let to see the king even his daughter; it is like a mystery for the people, because they see a ghost like a monster in the palace. **Denotation:** The Kingdom: a country, state, or territory ruled by a King or a Queen. There is a hidden meaning. It is not fully intended to show a kingdom. **Connotation:** The Kingdom connotes a palace attacked by a monstrous ghost.

**Doctor Prisoner (2019)**, released on March 2019. This drama is starred by Nam Goong Min and Kim Byung Chul. It tells about a genius doctor but he gets accident, then he gets fired from the hospital. After that he moves to be a doctor in a prison to help people in jail. **Denotation:** dictionary meaning is *a person who is qualified to treat people who are ill in prison*. **Connotation:** Doctor Prisoner connotes an emotional feeling; *a genius doctor who is working in a prison to help the people in crime but he is limited by his former doctor there, so he feels the real prison with his intelligence in medical*.

**The Last Empress (2019)**, released on February 2019. This drama is starred by Jang Na-Ra and Choi Jin-Hyuk. It tells about an actress who gets married with a Caesar, then she faces lots of conflicts in family with the royal family. Then she gets trapped in an incident of murdering her husband's grandmother. **Denotation:** dictionary meaning is *A woman who is a sovereign ruler of great power and rank, especially one ruling an empire, coming after all others in time or orde*. There is no hidden meaning. **Connotation:** The Last Empress; connotes a situation of *a coming of a woman into a royal family to become a wife of Caesar in Korea and ended in a mystery*.

**Romance is a Bonus Book (2019)**, released on January 2019. This drama is starred by Lee Na-Young and Lee Jong-Suk. It tells about a young editor in a publisher company who falls in love with a new staff in that company. **Denotation:** it is not fully intended a romance, but there is hidden meaning. **Connotation:** Romance is a bonus book that connotes *an editor in a publishing company finding his love in that publisher company, meaning that he works as an editor but he also finds his love there*.

**Romantic Doctor (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Han Suk-kyu and Yoo Yeon-seok. It tells about a genius surgeon who works in famous hospital. Then he gets a traumatic incident that makes him disappear and moves into a small city then practices in a small hospital by training two junior doctors there to struggle for the patients having no money. And they get involved in a love story. **Denotation.** *a person who is qualified to treat people who are ill, then connected with or about love to someone. The dictionary meaning is the same with connotation*. **Connotation:** Doctor Romantic connotes a an emotional feeling about *a love story of a practitioner/doctor in the midst of his work and he gets involved in love*.

**VIP (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Jang Na-ra and Lee Sang-Yoon. It tells about a woman who works for a team that deals with VIP customers of a department store. She is married to her workmate, who works on the same team. The couple face an unexpected case, which causes their lives to fall apart. **Denotation:** VIP: *it is an abbreviation of “very important person”, meaning a person who has great significance or value, but it is not fully intended as the real meaning.* **Connotation:** VIP connotes emotional feeling of a love story from a couple who works to the very important persons as customers in their company, where her husband getting affair to a woman she does not expect at all, and that the woman is her husband's affair. She thinks that she is only a staff like others, while she is the daughter of the owner of their company.

**The World of the Married (2020)**, released on March 2020. This drama is starred by Kim Hee-ae and Park Hae-Joon. It tells about a female doctor whose husband gets an affair with a young lady, younger than she, and then she tries to revenge to her husband. **Denotation:** *the earth of couple (husband and wife). It is intended as the real meaning.* **Connotation:** *The World of the Married connotes lives of husband and wife with all the problems and phenomena.*

**Itaewon Class (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Park Seo-Joon and Kim Da-Mi. It tells about a boy who gets dropped out from his school and his life becomes complicated. After that, he gets a turning point in his life and he changes and struggles to get success in Itaewon city. **Denotation:** *the dictionary meaning is category of things having some property or attribute in common in a famous city with tourist resorts in South Korea.* **Connotation:** *Itaewon Class connotes a community of people who have ever got failed then they change into success in a big city Itaewon.*

**Hi Bye, Mama (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Kim Tae-hee dan Lee Kyu-hyung. It tells about a mom who gets tragic accident and passed away, but then she reincarnates and has 49 days as a ghost to meet her daughter and husband. **Denotation:** *the dictionary meaning is a mother who greets and says bye to her child.* There is a hidden meaning from the title. **Connotation:** *Hi Bye, Mama connotes a situation of a mom who has passed away then has a second chance to see her family, then has to say good bye after 49 days.*

**The King: Eternal Monarch (2020)**, released on April 2020. This drama is starred by Lee Min-ho and Kim Go-eun. It tells about a Caesar in Korea who is trying to defeat devils that want to break and destroy humans and also his girlfriend. **Denotation:** *a king of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth*



*that is lasting or existing forever without end.* **Connotation:** The King Eternal Monarch connotes *a struggling of a king to stand his state from destruction of devils.*

**Chocolate (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Yoon Kye-sang and Ha Ji-won. It tells about a man who wants to be a chef but in fact he becomes a doctor, then he meets a lady as a chef and falls in love. Both of them love eating chocolate to get relaxing facing all their problems. **Denotation:** Chocolate: a food in the form of a paste or solid block made from roasted and ground cacao seeds. Chocolate; a paste or solid to eat. It is not fully intended as the real meaning. **Connotation:** Chocolate connotes an emotional feeling in the way of a couple to meet and face their problems in life.

**Hospital Playlist (2020)**, released on March 2020. This drama is starred by Jo Jung-suk and Yoo Yeon-seok. It tells about a friendship of five doctors since they are in university. Then they meet again and work in the same hospital. They meet their love story in that hospital. **Denotation:** a list of *an institution providing medical and surgical treatment and nursing care for sick or injured people.* There is a hidden meaning inside. **Connotation:** *Hospital Playlist* connotes a situation about *life and condition of working of five doctors in the same hospital.*

**A Piece of Your Mind (2020)**, released on March 2020. This drama is starred by Jung Hae-in and Chae Soo-bin. It tells about a love story between a programmer and a technician of music. They have different perspectives but they love each other. **Denotation:** *breaking the whole element of a person that enables them to be aware of the world and their experiences, to think, and to feel; the faculty of consciousness and thought.* It is not fully intended the real meaning. **Connotation:** A piece of mind connotes an emotional feeling of *two different persons with their own perspective trying to read and influence their couple mind and thought.*

**Forest (2020)**, released on January 2020. This drama is starred by Park Hae-Jin and Jo Bo-Ah. It tells about a couple who meets at a mysterious forest. Even though they do not want to, they must live together in the mysterious forest. Living there, they discover small pleasures. Kang San-Hyeok and Jung Young-Jae soon uncover a secret about themselves and the forest. **Denotation:** a large area covered chiefly with trees and undergrowth. It is fully intended as the real meaning. **Connotation:** Forest connotes *an adventure of a couple covered by many intrigues and problems to be solved by both of them secretly.*

## 5. Conclusion

Denotation meaning of the titles of Korean drama is dictionary meaning and in this study the writer uses oxford dictionary to find the meaning. The results show that denotation meanings in the titles are not fully intended as the real meaning of the words. Connotation is additional meaning or sense value contained in the titles of the drama. The writer uses the synopsis and short scripts of the Korean drama to find the connotation meanings. Based on connotation meanings, it can be concluded that all the titles connote and describe emotional feeling.

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