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## **Communicative Analysis of the Malayalam Translation of Shakespearean Dark Comedies using Gutt's Relevance Theory**

**Honey Joseph A.**  
Research Scholar,  
Department of English and Comparative Literature,  
Central University of Kerala,  
Kasaragod.

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### **Abstract:**

This study explores the viability of direct and indirect translation as approaches to the Malayalam translations of Shakespearean Dark Comedies and to analyze how translation can be characterized within the general framework as an interpretive form of communication using Gutt's relevance theory. The main aim of this article is to explain where and how translation approaches differ from insights from relevant theory, thereby highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of relevant theoretical approaches to solving translation problems. The relevance theory approaches translation from the point of view of communication success, but compares original and translated texts for equality. The meaning of text through a translator is to determine how receptors can successfully communicate with the audience.

**Keywords: Shakespearean Dark Comedies, Malayalam Translations, Gutt's Relevance Theory, Communication, Culture.**

This study explores the viability of direct and indirect translation as approaches to the Malayalam translations of Shakespearean Dark Comedies and to analyze how translation can be characterized within the general framework as an interpretive form of communication using Gutt's relevance theory. This paper highlights the need for translators to take steps to bridge the contextual gap between the source context and the receptor context, and how this can be done by providing footnotes in direct translation or by making clear information in direct translation. The main aim of this article is to explain where and how translation approaches differ from insights from relevant theory, thereby highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of relevant theoretical approaches to solving translation problems.

This paper seeks to determine what assumptions the text might make to its original readers, and to determine how best to make those assumptions for modern readers using two relevant theoretical approaches. “[T]here is a gap between the semantic representation of sentences and the thoughts communicated by the utterances”(Wilson and Sperber 6). In other words, the meaning of giving an utterance is not the same as being linguistically encoded. The grammatical and lexical elements of a sentence do not convey all its meaning. Conceptual elements make the difference between the meaningful representation of sentences and the thoughts that convey them. If a communication theory is to fully describe how human communication works, it must account for how it bridges the gap between the grammatical content of an utterance and its actual interpretation.

Relevance theory is an ostensive-inferential explanation of how communication works (usually described as simply an inferential model). In an inferential model communication is not primarily a matter of the speaker providing evidence of his/her informative intention (Wilson and Sperber 8). “The role of communication is intense in the form of a stimulus, verbal or non-verbal, to provide evidence of his / her informative intensity, which allows the audience to infer what he / she is trying to communicate” (8). The role of the audience is to infer from the stimulus provided by what they are trying to communicate. Thus, in the words of Wilson and Sperber “Inferential communication involves the formation and evaluation of hypotheses above communicator’s intentions” (9).

There is a gap between the semantic content of dark comedies and the message the text communicates, which can only be resolved by reading the content intended by the original author. It is not always possible to communicate certain messages to another content; regardless of how it is expressed. Human communication operates by assumption, which depends on the context, and the change in context in which pronunciation can be interpreted limits the communication of its content. When a change in content is large, its boundaries can be stringent, as is usually the case when translating an ancient text for a modern audience. This insightful review begins with a description of the Schiffrin interactive model.

The interactional model of communication shifts over view of participant role (the communicator and the recipient, the message and the audience); it also place less stress on the intersubjectivity. Put most simply, this model assumes that what

underlies communication is behavior regardless of whether that behavior is international or not. (397-98)

This study aims to elucidate how the context of the target text differs from the context of its source text in both direct and indirect translation. The study focuses on the contextual effects of dark comedies and the strategies that translators use to convey those contextual outcomes, which can be handled within the framework of relevance theory, which is a context-based theory, such as culture-specific items (i.e., stimulant stimuli).

This paper uses Ernest August Gutt's (1989) application of relevance theory to translation studies for the theoretical background. He describes his approaches using two lines of reported speech: direct and indirect quotation. As is known, in the direct quote, the person wants to report exactly the same word as someone else. However, indirect quotation tends to approximate someone else's text rather than the overall text. Gutt resembles translation to interlingual reported speech and thus put towards two kinds of translation. A) Direct translation b) Indirect translation. In direct translation, the purpose is to convey the overall message exactly and indirect translation to convey just some parts of the speech which is considered relevant to the target audience (Smith 73-74).

More specifically, the focus of the direct quote is to convey the message to the other person. In direct quotation, the speaker will only convey the required part. Accordingly, "when examining the extent of translation, direct translation focuses on delivering the right message, while the same indications of actual and indirect translation focus only on certain conventions of the original text that are most relevant to the TT audience"(Smith 109-110). As for Gutt, communicative clues are "the subset of the textual properties that are significant for the intended meaning" (153).

The translator, who uses the indirect translation approach, does not try to convey all the assumptions in the original text, but rather the assumptions he / she thinks are relevant to the target audience (Smith, 74). Thus indirect translation is "flexible, context-sensitive concept of translation...which allows for very different types of target texts to be called translation" (Fawcett, 138). Thus, the translator does not provide all the communication clues to the targeted readers. Malkmjaer states that "it does not focus on the way in which something was said but

rather on what was said, rather like indirection quotations do” (31). Accordingly, he / she “provide the reader with only the relevant part of the pronunciation that provides a sociocultural and historical context based on the specific type of culture. The translation is based on the context of the target readers. Therefore, the reader does not need to be familiar with the source-text context because the translator takes into account the context of the target-text reader” (Gutt 417). He / she provide “the target reader with the context they need to express each other as a culture-specific item. Direct translation creates a complete interpretative analogy; indirect translation tends to transmit only interpretive analogy to relevant aspects” (Smith 109-110).

From this point of view, examples extracted from the translations of Shakespearean dark comedies may be scrutinized in the light of these two approaches regarding the importance of context in the translations.

### Examples from the Malayalam Translations of Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*

#### Example 1

ST: Count: Unless her **prayers**, whom heaven delights to hear  
And loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath  
O greatest justice. (AW.III.iv.27)

TT: ലീലവിനഭാപരിലാലിതമയ അന്ത്യ രക്തരീതി രുന്ദ്രമണി നിമന്തയയുവരീ രക്തരക്തം  
കടകംബം ന്നാട്ടു ക്ഷമരതല ക്ഷയം ക്ഷമിരിന്ന ആദയല് ക്ഷമവരതരതരതര  
കുറ്റ്തുമുരതര രുദ്രക്ഷമം രക്തരക്തം ക്ഷമ ക്ഷമം ഹൃദയ പതകിയയയനു ന്നേം ?  
(Sangunnimenon,45)

[līlavinēāda parilālasitamāya antapurattilirunnu mēāhinimārāya yuvatīratnaññaḷuṭe  
kaṭākṣabāṇaṇṇaḷkkumātraṁ lākkāyeākkaṇṭirinna ā ōmalkkalēbaratte atyantā kūrṭtumūṭta  
rudrākṣāsūtraññaḷkk lakṣyamākkitīkkunnaturṁ ī mahāpatakiyāya ṇṇāṇēā?]

This passage is translated according to Gutt's Indirect Translation method. In this example ‘**രുദ്രക്ഷമം**[Rudraksham] is a culture specific item having a religious meaning. The English correspondence of it is “Rudraksha”. It is the Malayalam word which means “is a seed that is used as prayer bead in Hinduism”. “**രുദ്രക്ഷമം**”[Rudraksham] is linked with the people in Hindu

religion. People used this to handle in hand to pray to protect themselves from the bad events caused by the devil. The Malayalee readers may reach the message by the translator directly as they have knowledge and background information about between the Hindu’s and Rudraksha.

In the above example, the ‘prayers’ has been translated as ‘**രുദ്രകഷ**[Rudhraksham] by the translators using indirect translation approach. Here ‘prayer’ used as the communicative clues in this example. In the relevance theory, the context of the target audience plays a crucial role in the process of interpretation and understanding. However, it is probable that this culture specific word is not mutually manifested to source and target readers.

When the translation is scrutinized, it is presumed that the translator has been sensitive enough, in terms of the context of the target readers. Accordingly, here in the example, the utterance ‘prayer’ is utilized by the translators in the target text, but “**രുദ്രകഷ**[Rudraksham] is added by adapting the culture specific word to the cognitive environment of the target readers. By this way, it has been brought in compliance with the cognition of the target readers. If the translator had translated it directly as ‘prayer’ it wouldn’t have been adequate. All in all, due to the arrangement done for the context of the target readers via direct translation approach, they may easily reach the message of the culture specific item.

**Example 2**

ST: [Trumpets sound]The King’s coming; I know by this trumpets. Sirrah,

Inquire further after me. I had talk of you last night;

Though you are a fool and a knave you eat. Go

To; follow. (AW.V.ii.48-50)

TT: തമുവരനും പരിവാരങ്ങളും എല്ലാ ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങളും ചെയ്ത ചരിത്രം , 64 കുട്ടന്മാർ വിഭവങ്ങളിലേക്ക് തിരുവിതാംകൂർ അവിടുത്തെ അമൃതത്തിന് വെറും നെയ്യും “നിത്യകേട്ത” “നിയമവേടി”, “മുമ്പിൽ തള്ളി”, “ചിരതവിളി”, മുതലായ രജകീയനും ബുദ്ധങ്ങളെയും മറ്റും ആശയങ്ങളും സമർപ്പണങ്ങളും മറ്റും വിവരിച്ചു കൊടുത്ത ഈ കഥയെ പെരിയയിൽ പട്ടാഭിഷേകം ചെയ്ത കഥയെ അഥവാ നരഗർഭകന്മാരായ കരുടെയുടെ ക്ഷീകണം (Sangunnimenon, 86)

[tampurānum parivāraṅṅaḷum eḷunnaḷḷiya ghēāsayātracaritavum, 64kuttam vibhavaṅṅaḷēātkūṭiya aviṭutte amṛtettinre varṇanayum, “nityakkeāṭṭa” “niyamaveṭi”, “mumpilṭṭaḷi”, “cirutaviḷi”, mutalāya rājakīyāsambaraṅṅaḷuṭeyum marṛum āgamānaṅṅaḷum samabrayataṅṅaḷum marṛum

vivaricceḷutunnata ī kathayūṭe paridhiyil peṭṭatallāyḱayāl kathayūṭe avasānaraṅgattēkk vāyanakkāruṭe śrad'dhayye kṣamikkāṇaṁ]

This passage is translated according to Indirect Translation method. In this example] “നിത്യകേട്ക “നിയമവേടി, “മുമ്പിലാര് ത്തി, “ചിരതരിളി[“nityakkeāṭṭa” “niyamaveṭi”, “mumpilttali”, “cirutavili”]is culture specific words related to the king and court. However, this culture-specific item is presumed not to be known at least and even not to be heard by the target text readers. Hence it does not allow the target audience to enjoy the message by the author because the culture specific words have been foreignzed in translation.

However, the translator’s choice, “നിത്യകേട്ക “നിയമവേടി, “മുമ്പിലാര് ത്തി, “ചിരതരിളി” [“nityakkeāṭṭa” “niyamaveṭi”, “mumpilttali”, “cirutavili”]also does not correspond to the exactdefinition of “this trumpets” in English. From the relevance theoretic perspective, it is significant for the translator to interest the culture-specific items correctly by taking the content of the target readers into account so that the target readers into account so that the target readers have a smoother reading by using indirect translation. In that way, the translator seems to have adapted the culture specific items to the cognitive environment to the target readers.

**Translation from Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida**

**Example 3**

ST: Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice.

(TC.I.ii.228-229)

TT: ലാവണ്യദേവത എന്നീ ക്ഷേമങ്ങളായ മന്ദര  
ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കില് , അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് ഷകപമേ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുമായിരുന്നു .(Sasidharan, 833)

[lāvanyadēvata enikk peṅṅalāyēāmarreāru svarggadēvata enikk putriyāyēā uṅṅāyirunnenkil, addēhattiniṣṭṭaṁ pēāle teraṅṅeṭukkāmāyirunnu]

This passage is translated according to Direct Translation method. Here Shakespeare used ‘grace’ in the sense as one of the three goddesses in Greek mythology personifying loveliness or grace. Chaucer’s Pandarus similarly professes willingness to have even his sister be Troilus’s lover, if he so chooses (TC, Intro. 151). But translator used in the sense of ‘Goddess of Love’. Here the target readers did not be familiar with Greek mythology and their goddesses so it has been translated as ‘ലാവണ്യദേവത’ [lāvanyadēvata], are familiar with target readers.

However, the target readers have difficulty in comprehending the English word because they have no idea of its meaning in their cognitive environment, and the background information the cultural word is unfamiliar to the context of the target readers, which shows it is not mutually manifest to both sides of the readers. Here in the example, the target readers are expected to read the text in their own language but in the source text. However, reading the text in the source context makes the accession of the message of the cultural specific word impossible due to the unshared cognition of both sides of the readers. Thus they may have difficulty in understanding the message with this direct translation approach.

**Example 4:**

ST: Nestor: The sea being smooth,/how many shallow bauble boats dare sail. (TC. I.iii.34-35)

TT: കടലു് ശാന്തരികകളു് ഏറ്റുപുറത്തു് അതു് ചുവന്നിടങ്ങളു് കറുത്തു് ഉള്ളവയുടേപ്പോലോ കടലു് അരിമറില് വിഹരിക്കുന്നതു് . (Sasidharan, 836)

[kaṭaḷ śāntayirikkumpēāl etrayetra tuḷavañcikaḷāṅ ṛṭuṁ kevubhāramuḷḷa nekayēāṭappēām kaṭalinṛe virimāṛil viharikkunnat]

This passage is translated according to Direct Translation method. Here ‘bauble’ in source text is used as a child’s plaything but the translator used as ‘തു ചുവന്നി’ [thuzhavanchi]. The word ‘തു ചുവന്നി’ [thuzhavanchi] is used by Malayalees as small boat and the word bauble cannot understand by the foreign readers. So they are required to have a successful communication; thus, the translators are expected to lead the target readers to a correct understanding to the utterance by supplying the context envisaged by the author. Accordingly, the culture item is not adapted to the cognitive environment of the target readers; it gets more difficult to comprehend for the target readers. The reason of is that they do not share the same knowledge about it. It is not mutually manifest to them. The only way for the target readers not to miss the intended interpretation of the culture specific items by the author are to look form the source readers. With the use of linguistic translation strategy and direct translation for such a culture loaded item, it seems that the translators have not adapted the culture specific item to the cognitive environment of the target readers and made it inappropriate and incomprehensible for the cognitive environment of the target readers.

**Example 5:**

ST:Blunt wedges rive **hard knots**; the seeded pride

That hath to this maturity blown up. (TC. I.iii.316-17)



TT: പരുകുപ്പുളംതൊട്ടിമരത്തുകടലിടിയുടപെട്ടിടം കഴിയു. (Sasidharan, 843)

[parukkan pū] keāṅtumātramē kaṭṭikūṭiya muṭṭa peāṭṭikkān kaḷiyu]

This passage is translated according to Direct Translation method. Here in the example “പുള്പു] is used instead of **knots** by the translator. ‘പുള്പു] used for small wood piece but in the source text knot is used in a different sense. Translator used ‘പുള്പു] to understand the Malayalam readers.

Nevertheless, from the relevance theoretic perspective, since the target readers do have such background information as illustrated above in their current cognitive environment, this may make them have difficulty in getting adequate contextual effects when compared to the Malayalam readers.

The target readers feel the forgiveness of the culture specific item. Hence it may hard for the target readers to figure out that the life style of the people in Paris. Then it can be stated that they need to put their own effort to comprehend and interpret it with the source reader’s content since the communicative clue, “പരുകുപ്പുള parukkan pū]. This may arise from the desire of the translators to focus on the exact message by the author. However, by this way, the context required for the target readers to draw the assumptions and message has not been provided by the translators. This results in target reader’s inability to use their current content to recover the message, which prevents the target readers from reaching the link. Then it is clear that direct translations approach has been put into use by the translators.

**Example from the Translation of *Measure for Measure***

**Example 6**

ST: Isabella: Could great men thunder

As Jove himself does, Jove would ne’er be quiet. (MM.II.ii.111-112)

TT: ഇസബെല്ല : വർണ്ണനയമനുഷ്യർക്കുണ്ടെന്നപോലെ ഇതിമുഴുക്കൻ കഴിവുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ഒരിക്കലും ഇങ്ങനെ സന്ദയം കിട്ടുമായിരുന്നില്ല . (Mani, 30)

[isabella: vampanmārāya manuṣyarkk indraneppēāle iṭimulukkān kaḷivunṭāyirunnenkil orikkalum indrane svairyam kiṭṭumāyirunnilla]

This passage is translated according to Direct Translation method. In Roman mythology Jove or Jupiter is the king of gods and God of sky and thunder, equivalent to Zeus in Greek

traditions. Here translator change Jove into 'ഇന്ദ്രൻ' [indran] is Hindu God, the god of war and weather; also the King of the Gods or Devas and Lord of Heaven or Svargaloka in Hinduism. The translator used this God to equalize the cultural context.

The Malayalam readers can comprehend the culture specific words easily since they are acquainted in their context. Nevertheless, this utterance is not relevant to target readers because the context necessary for the target readers to recover the message of it has been not supplied to target readers. It is not mutually manifest. With their own current cognitive environment, it is hard for them to understand it. Then, communication may not be successful due to the irrelevant stimulus. Thus it is difficult for target readers to draw inferences and reach the message by the author completely with direct translation approach.

## Conclusion

Thus, the most prominent examples from the Malayalam translations have been included in the study to show how these culture specific items are translated in the light of direct and indirect translation approaches put forward by Gutt. This study investigated how the context of the target text differs from the context of its source text, and how the context of the target text differs from the context of its source text by indirect translation. With this focus in mind, the study has been discussed through these examples.

It has been revealed that in *Pakarathinu Pakaram*, *Subhanthyagallem Subham*, *Troilusum Cressidayum*, *Alavinu Thakka Alavu*, the translators have not adapted the target-text reader by using the direct translation. That is, culture-specific items are not mutually exclusive to author and target text readers. They do not share similar assumptions about culture-specific items, which make them difficult to understand for the target text reader. However, there seems to be bringing a lot of attention by the translator Sangunnimenon, 1), Mutual expression of culture-specific terms for author and target text readers 2) ) Familiarization of culture-specific terms to the cognitive environment of target readers, and 3) The context required to create the contextual effects that target readers need is crucial to the understanding of the message.

Upon the detailed explanations of the examples selected from the translation of the three books, it is necessary to state that context of the text *Pakarathinu Pakaram*, *Subhanthyagallem Subham*, *Troilusum Cressidayum*, *Alavinu Thakka Alavu* did not from the context of its English

translation. The target reader will not be able to understand this translation through direct translation: 1) they translated the context of the source text, regardless of the cognitive environment of the targeted readers, 2) their translation will not be mutually exclusive to the source text author and the target text reader, 3) They do not adopt culture specific items to suit the target reader's context.

When it comes to the question, how can the context of a target text differ from the context of its source text in direct translation? *Mangalantham Subham Sarvam Athava Nathene Nediya Nari* through indirect translation is more understandable for the target readers for the reasons are: 1) He has taken the context of the source text in terms of the cognitive environment of the target readers by transmitting only the relevant information to the target readers, 2) He brought up the context of the source text by making some adjustments in translation, 3) He created the context in which the author envisioned the translation by forcing the target readers to use their own context instead of the actual context.

As the result of this deep analysis, it can be stated that in the translation of *Pakarathinu Pakaram, Subhanthiyagallam Subham, Troilusum Cressidayum, Alavinu Thakka Alavu*, the context of the translation does not differ much from the context of its source text because it has been domesticated by the translator which is closer, more accessible and understandable to the target readers due to the importance attached by the translator to the context whereas the translation of *Mangalantham Subham Sarvam Athava Nathene Nediya Nari* differs considerably from its source text because it seems more foreignized to the target readers owing to the fact that the translators have not adapted the culture specific words to the context of the target text readers.

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