# THE ROLE OF DEGREE OF RELEVANCE IN ASSESSING TRANSLATION OF SATIRE

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**Abstract**

Translation quality assessment is based on the translator's fulfillment in transferring the message. In the case of translating satire, it must consider adequacy aspects. This paper aims to analyze the translation of satirical utterances using the perspective of relevance theory. It explores the aspect of relevance degree in translation satire. Based on relevance theory, the translation satire and its source expression should result in similar interpretations. The translators are not only required to translate the messages of the satire from the source text (ST) into the target text (TT), but they must also produce interpretative resemblance of the same relevance degree. This research uses qualitative method and aims to analyze the degree of relevance in the translation of satire. It belongs to translation product oriented research. The data used satire in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (1989) and its translation in the *Binatangisme* novel from Mahbub Djunaidi (2016). The satirical utterance in the ST will be analyzed employing the satire classification. The findings indicate that degree of relevance determines the interpretative resemblance, the similarity of implicated conclusion, and success of communication. The degree of relevance contributes to the translation of satire.

**Key Word:** *Degree of Relevance, Satire, Translation, Novel*

**Abstrak**

Pengukuran kualitas terjemahan didasarkan pada keberhasilan penerjemah dalam mengalihkan pesan. Pada kasus penerjemahan satire, hal ini harus mempertimbangkan aspek ketercukupan. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penejemahan tuturan satiris berdasarkan pandangan teori relevansi. Artikel ini menjelaskan aspek derajat relevansi dalam penerjemahan satire. Berdasarkan teori relevansi, satire pada teks sumber dan terjemahannya harus mempunyai kesamaan interpretasi. Penerjemah tidak hanya dituntut untuk mengalihkan pesan satire dari teks sumber (TSu) ke dalam teks sasaran (TSa) tetapi dia juga harus menghasilkan kemiripan interpretasi melalui kesamaan derajat relevansi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang bertujuan menganalisis derajat relevansi dalam penerjemahan satire. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam penelitian terjemahan yang berorientasi pada produk. Data penelitian berupa

satire dalam novel *Animal Farm* karangan George Orwell (1989) dan terjemahannya dalam novel *Binatangisme* oleh Mahbub Djunaidi (2016). Tuturan satiris pada TSu akan dianalisis dengan menggunakan kategori jenis satire. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa derajat relevansi menentukan kemiripan interpretasi, kesamaan kesimpulan terimplikasi, dan kesuksesan dalam komunikasi. Derajat relevansi berkontribusi dalam penerjemahan satire.

**Kata Kunci:** Degree of Relevance, Satire, Terjemahan, Novel

## A.  INTRODUCTION

Translation is an act of communication in which a communicator tries to convey the message to the communicant. They must process and communicate the message clearly so that the message can be understood. Translation has a communicative purpose that is set by the author, the translator, and the target reader. The purpose is influenced by the social and cultural context as well as the ideology of the ST(source text) writer, translator, and the TT (target text) reader. A translator must be able to process and deliver the messages to the readers for the interest of the TT readers' understanding. Therefore, a translator must produce the same message in his translation.

In translating literary works, a translator does not only need to produce the same message but is also demanded to maintain the author's style and text (Hu, 2003). The translator should produce adequate translation since literary works have aesthetic functions, so he/she must have a socio-cultural background. In the case of translating satirical utterances, a translator is encountered with the problem of finding interpretative resemblance. Translators should preserve the meaning and result in the similar interpretations of the original. The similar interpretation shows that the translation is relevant to ST. Therefore, the implementation of relevance theory in translating satire is significant.

Relevance is a cognitive pragmatics approach to communication based on contextual effects and processing efforts. In the relevance theory, context is crucial. The context of an utterance is the set of premises used to interpret the utterance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Context is not an external factor but refers to the cognition of the hearer. It emphasizes the importance of the information available to process utterance or text. Context is part of the cognitive environment used in text interpretation. It is not given but selected, and the choice of a particular context is determined by relevance. (Zhao, 2011).

Relevance is based on the assumption that the hearer will make certain degree of effort to process the utterance.Whenthe hearerdoes not need much effort in understanding the utterance, it can be considered that the utterance contains sufficient information which is relevant to the hearer (Diaz-Pérez, 2014). Relevance theory also states that context is a psychological construction that must be established and developed in the interaction process to choose the correct interpretation (Zhao, 2011). Relevance is related to degrees, so the principle of this theory is not related to relevant or irrelevant utterance, but it refers to the degree of relevance. There are two information processing in communication, namely relevant (optimal degree of relevance) or irrelevant (minimum degree of relevance). Relevance is also based on contextual effects and processing effort.The greater of contextual effect achieved by the hearer result the greater relevance of the text. On the contrary, the greater processing effort required by the hearer indicates the lower relevance of the text. The basis of the relevance theory is the

communication process that expects optimal relevance in which the hearer can meet contextual effects with minimal processing costs.

In the case of translation, the degree of relevance is measured by the relevant ST into the TT. The translation is considered as strong relevance (high degree of relevance) if it involves the similar interpretation. In other words, translation with strong relevance has similar contextual implications. Assessing translation satire using relevance theory involves three stages analysis. There are explicature, implicated premises and implicated conclusion. Explicature is the meaning of the utterance. Implicated premises refers to assumption based on the utterances, and implicated conclusion indicates context involved by translator to express utterance in TT.

Studies related to relevance have been conducted by Macagno (2018), White (2011), and Zhao (2011). These studies focused on the relevance analysis without involving the translation study. The relevance analysis associated with translation study was carried out by Diaz-Perez (2014). This study focused on translating puns on film titles in Spanish into English using the perspective of relevance theory. This research is more specific on the use of strategies by the translator in producing puns in the target language. In addition, Diaz-Perez (2013) also conducted a translation analysis of wordplay based on the same perspective. This research focused on the translation strategies applied in translating wordplay oriented to the translation product and the translation process. Translation research using relevance theory is also carried out by Liu (2014). This study still used film as the data source. This study also analyzed the translator's techniques or strategies in translating verbal allusions. Ignacio and Orso (2016) also implemented relevance analysis in translation study. In this study,

they focused on the cultural effects of Arabic into English. The study also tried to explain the translator's strategies in producing translations with high degree of relevance. The study related to translation and relevance was also carried out by Xinya (2016). The research focused on analyzing the effectiveness of strategies in translating movie subtitles. This study showed how the theory of relevance became a solution to problems in translation such as cultural differences, word plays, and styles. Besides, relevance theory can overcome language, cultural, and stylistic problems in translation.

This article also studies the translation from a relevance perspective, especially the degree of relevance. It is due to the fact that in the translation of satire, the translator must produce the same degree of relevance between the ST and TT. Translation of satire must also consider providing sufficient context, so the reader does not need much processing effort to obtain information. In the context of translation as an act of communication, the translator needs the principle of relevance in transferring messages from the ST into TT. If a translator fails in producing a similar degree of relevance in his translation, the translation will not be adequate. It is because the translation does not have the same interpretation as the source text. In other words, the higher the degree of relevance in translation shows the similar interpretation to the ST.

The degree of relevance can indicate the contextual implication that is involved by the translator. The message of satire can easily understand when the translator involves the similar contextual implication. The message's easily understanding shows that there is no greater processing effort in knowing about the satire message. Furthermore, the degree of relevance in satire translation can impact the success of communication. The application of the

principle of relevance in satire translation is essential because translators are not only required to produce the same message but also produce interpretative resemblance.

## B. METHODS

This study employed qualitative method by comparing satirical utterances in the ST and their translations in the TT. This research was conducted to determine the degree of relevance of the translation of satire in the novel using a single embedded case study; so we only focus on the analysis of satire, especially the degree of relevance of the translation of satire from English into Indonesian. The object of this research is a novel entitled *Animal Farm* by George Orwell in 1951 and its translation *Binatangisme* by Mahbub Junaedi in 2016.

We collected the data of satirical utterances and their Indonesian translation from the research object by using the parameter of satire. The researchers identified satirical utterances and classified them into the utterance of critics toward attitude with irony, parody, sarcasm, and exaggeration. Meanwhile, in analyzing satirical utterances, we highlighted the translations in the Indonesian versions of the novel and identified the degree of relevance. The technique of data analysis was done through the following stages (1) identifying the satire utterance and its Indonesian translation; (2) analyzing the degree of relevance; (3) counting the percentage of each classification; (4) displaying in a table; (5) drawing the conclusion of the results of the analysis.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Results*

The analysis presented in this paper will focus on types of satire and the degree of relevance

### *Type of Satire*

Among the 158 data categorized as satires in the novel *Animal Farm*, there are four types of satire used by the author. They are irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, and parody.

*Table 1Type of Satire*

| Type of Satire | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Irony | 117 | 74.05% |
| Sarcasm | 26 | 16.45% |
| Exaggeration | 9 | 5.69% |
| Parody | 6 | 3.79% |
| Total | 158 | 100% |

Based on Table 1, the data distribution shows that the dominant satire belongs to irony with 117 data. It means that satire in ST uses indirect speech to express the critics. Table 1 also shows that the less dominant satire is a parody with 6 data which means satire in *Animal Farm* is not presented using humor. The detailed analysis can be explained as follows.

(1) ST: *Remove man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever*

The utterance belongs to a satirical utterance toward actions or behaviour. The utterance is included in an expressive illocution. This illocution is intended as an evaluation mentioned in the utterance (Searle, 1979). Utterance intends to provide an assessment of the attitudes or actions of humans. The Manor character's utterance was used to judge human activity. In this case, Manor judged humans as the cause of misery for the animal. In the *Animal Farm* novel, it is clear that Manor negatively evaluates human habits. Therefore, this utterance intends to make the animals realize

that humans are the source of animals' misery.

Based on the context of the situation, the utterance was stated by a Manor who is a senior pig at Jones's farm. Manor's utterance is addressed to all the animals on Jones's farm. In *Animal Farm* novel, it is described that the land in English is fertile and abundant of food but the misery experienced by the animal. Animal misery is caused by the actions of humans in stealing animal production. Therefore, the utterance is a satirical utterance by Manor in criticizing human activities that have been misery to the animals.

The utterance is used by the author to criticize everything related to injustice. The choice of command sentences in the utterance is due to the author wants to emphasize that the cause of injustice is humans who are representatives of the authorities. The choice of the phrase *the root cause of hunger* and *overwork* shows the author's intention to give a strong impression that the human causes the problem of injustice. The utterance belongs to experiential satire (Simpson, 2003). It is because the satire targets in the utterances are the conditions and experiences of animals in particular events. Besides, the author's choice of a sentence in the utterance is the satirical style to express annoyance with humans. There is a criticism that the writer conveys through the satire using indirect speech, or the meaning of utterance is different from the intended meaning. Therefore, the type of satire in case (1) belongs to irony.

### Degree of Relevance

Satire translation aims to maintain communication with a focus on achieving interpretive resemblance. In translating satire, the translator will consider the target readers' expectations of the TT and maintain the same interpretation with the ST. There are three steps in analyzing the relevance,

namely explicature, implicated premises (contextual assumption), and implicated conclusion (contextual implication) (Wilson & Sperber, 2006), while in determining the degree of relevance, the translation should have a similar interpretation to the ST.

### Strong Relevance

(2) ST: *All the habits of man are evil*
TT: *Semua kebiasaan bangsa manusia itu jahat!*

Utterance (2) has an explicature of *all the habits of man are evil*. The implicated premise (contextual assumption) from the explicature is that *all human habit is evil.* The implicated premise means that all human behavior towards animals is bad. This implicated premise intends to state that all human actions are bad because they cause misery to animal life. The novel *Animal Farm* describes that animals are treated like slaves. Therefore, the implicated conclusion (contextual implication) of the utterance is *all human beings' action causes the animal's misery*. The satire is translated into *semua kebiasaan bangsa manusia itu jahat!*. The satire has implicated premises that *semua kebiasaan binatang itu jahat* (All human habits are evil). This premises intended to state that *semua tindakan yang dilakukan manusia kepada binatang merupakan kejahatan* (All of human actions toward animals is evil). In *Binatangisme* novel, it tells that animals become slavery of humans. Implicated conclusion of satire TT is *semua tindakan manusia terhadap binatang itu jahat* (All of human actions toward animals is evil). Satire SL and TT have the similar meaning that animals think all human actions are evil. The meaning of the satire can be understood through the implicated conclusions in ST and TT. This expression describes that all human activities are a source of animal's misery. Thus, the implicated conclusion in the TT is relevant in the ST. The similarity of implicated

conclusions causes the same interpretation of satire so that the degree of relevance of the satire is categorized as strong relevance.

### Weak Relevance

(3) ST: *Why then we do continue in this miserable condition?*
TT: *Nah! Sekali lagi, nah! Kenapa keadaan kita terus saja susah sengsara?! Kenapa keadaan kita terus saja tergencet hingga gepeng?! Kenapa keadaan kita terus saja terseok-seok seperti mahkluk buangan di bawah matahari?! Kenapa kita kerja makin lama makin keras, tapi hidup makin lama makin brengsek?! Kenapa?!*

In case (3) ST utterance has an explicature *why then we do continue in this miserable condition?* The explicature can be used to construct implicated premise or contextual assumption. They are *the life of animals is miserable, and the miserable condition of animals still continues*. The implicated premises means that the misery of animal life is still ongoing. This implied premise intends to express the misery of animals because of human power. In the novel *Animal Farm*, it is described that the life of animals is very miserable under human authority. Therefore, the implicated conclusion of the utterance is *the life of the animal is still in a miserable condition*.

Satire in TT has implicated premises that *keadaan hidup binatang sengsara* (the life of animal is misery)*, binatang harus bekerja keras untuk memenuhi kebutuhan manusia (*animal must overwork to fulfill the human need). *Binatang dianggap sebagai kelompok kelas dua*, (animal is considered as the second class), *binatang bekerja keras namun tidak mendapatkan hasil yang sebanding* (animal overwork but they do not get equal result. In *Binatangisme* novel, it described that animal life is miserable. Implicated premises in satire TT is *semua tindakan manusia menyebabkan*

*kesengsaraan bagi binatang* (All of the humas action causes the animal misery). Implicated conclusion in satire TT is *kehidupan binatang merupakan kehidupan perbudakan* (The life of animal is slavery). Satire in SL and TT have a different interpretation. The message of the ST satire can be understood through the implicated conclusions, namely *life of the animal is still in miserable condition*. Whereas, satire in TT has intended meaning that *kehidupan binatang merupakan kehidupan perbudakan* (The life of animal is slavery). Thus, the implicated conclusions contained in TT are less relevant with ST, and it results in different interpretations of satire. This difference interpretation causes the degree of relevance of the satire to be weak.

The percentage of the degree of relevance will show the frequency of translation results related to the degree of relevance. It also shows the percentage of the strong and weak relevance categories.

*Table 2 Degree of Relevance*

| Degree of Relevance | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strong Relevance | 126 | 79.75% |
| Weak Relevance | 32 | 20.25% |
| Total | 158 | 100% |

Table 2 shows the percentage of the degree of relevance for translating satire. It is clearly seen that translation with strong relevance is 126 data while satire translated into weak relevance category is 32 data. Based on the data comparation, it can be concluded that satire translated into the strong relevance category is dominant. Table 2 also shows the percentage of data with strong relevance is 79.75%. It means that the translator can maintain the degree of relevance by producing satire with similar interpretations in TT. There is also a translator effort to change the degree of relevance in his translation since 20.25% of data belongs to weak relevance. The degree

of relevance change shows that the translator adds the information in his translation, and it causes a different interpretation with satire in the ST.

### Discussion

The section will discuss the roles of the degree of relevance in the translation of satire. There are three roles namely, contributions to the interpretative resemblance, influences to the contextual implication, and effects on the success of communication.

### Contribution of the Degree of Relevance to the Interpretative Resemblance

Gutt (2000) introduced the idea of direct translation is that the utterance in the target text will have an interpretive resemblance to the original if it is in its original context.

(4) ST: *The work of teaching and organizing the others fell naturally upon the pigs, who were generally recognized as being the cleverest of the animals.*
TT: *Tugas mengajar, tugas mengorganisir, karuan saja jatuh pada pundak para babi, yang pada umumnya dipandang punya kelebihan kecerdasan dibanding binatang-binatang lain.*

In some cases, translators are encountered with cultural problems, so it is difficult to produce interpretive resemblance between ST and TT. In fact, the translator also finds it difficult to translate ST and TT, which can produce the same contextual effect. In example (4), the translator results in a similar implicated conclusion in his translation, so the degree of relevance of ST and TT is the same. The author involves the contexts implication that the pig is the cleverest animal in *Animal Farm*. The pig was described as a different character from the other animal. Pigs worked using their brain and became the leader of the farm. The translator, however, translates the utterance with the same information to the TT. Besides, the translator maintains the character of the pig and the contextual implication in the TT. The translator brings up satirical utterances in the target language text involving a similar context. Thus, case (4) has a similar interpretation between ST and TT.

### Influences of the Degree of Relevance to Contextual Implication

In translating satire, the translator will consider the target readers' expectations of TT and the interaction of the text and context. The translation will also ensure that the text can produce adequate contextual effects and minimum processing efforts for the reader. Zhou (2004) as cited (Zhonggang, 2006) states the degree of relevance with explaining each category. Strong relevance shows relatively clear contextual implication and some necessary processing effort, whereas weak relevance is implied in their contextual implication and considerable processing effort. In the case of translation, clear contextual implication shows that the translator successfully transfers the message of satire. On the contrary, unclear contextual implication indicates that the translator fails in transferring the satire.

(5) ST: *Remove man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished forever*
TT: *Enyahkan seluruh makhluk manusia dari muka bumi, maka biang kelaparan dan cemeti kerja keras akan sirna selama-lamanya!*

Case (5) shows that the translator successfully transfers the message of satire. It is due to ST and TT having similar interpretations from the implicated conclusion. The implicated conclusion in ST is that the man causes hunger and overwork

for the animals, while in the TT, the implicated conclusion is *manusia adalah penyebab kelaparan dan kerja keras bagi binatang* (The man causes of hunger and overwork for the animals).

Concerning processing efforts, it can be observed that clear contextual implication makes less processing effort. The reader of the ST finds satire implicitly. Readers of the ST can read implicit information so that satirical utterances can achieve an adequate contextual effect with minimum processing effort. Furthermore, the translator as a reader of the ST also processes implicit information into his translation. The translator also involves information through contextual implication. Thus, the meaning of the satire that the writer intended through utterance can be conveyed through the translation without more processing effort. In case (5), the utterance shows relatively clear contextual implication with necessary processing effort. It is in line with Zhonggang's (2006) research that literary translation is more difficult for the translator because he has to deal with a lot of implicit information. Implicit information has characteristics, such as multilevel communication skills, context dependence, the correlation between implied information, text, context, etc.

### Effects of the Degree of Relevance on the Successful Communication

The degree of relevance also has an impact on the success of communication. In the context of translation as an act of communication, the translator has two roles. Translators are readers for source language and writers for target language text. The translator must find the meaning intended by the author by processing the message and conveying it to the target reader with minimal effort of understanding. Relevance limits the translation to what is meant to be conveyed and how it is expressed (Gutt, 2000). Furthermore, Gutt states that people

tend to use economic principles in communication. The speaker must generate the correct assumptions to direct the listener to the intended meaning without great processing effort.

The translation of the relevance theory framework is the result of achieving similar explications and implicatures from the original text. This is in line with Gutt's (1996) statement that in translating implicit information, the translator focuses on the success of communication. It means that when the TT's interpretive resemblance cannot be achieved, the translator will translate to maintain the success of communication. Since the target text involves more information, the reader is also less processing effort in understanding the satire.

*(6)* ST: *Let us face it, our lives are miserable, laborious and short.*
TT: *Mari kita perhatikan baik-baik: hidup kita ini sebenarnya menyedihkan. Hidup kita ini terbebani kelewat banyak kerja keras. Hidup kita ini amat singkat!*

In case (6), the translator involves new linguistic elements in his translation. They are *sebenarnya menyedihkan, terbebani kelewat banyak kerja keras,* and *amat singkat.* It is due to the translator receives intended meaning that is not stated in the ST's satirical utterance. The intended meaning is presented in the TT through the additional linguistic elements. By expressing the new linguistic elements, the translator expects the target reader receive the same implicated conclusion and make successful communication.

### D. CONCLUSION

The translation of satire requires the translator to produce an interpretative resemblance in which he/she should consider the degree of relevance. Degree of relevance contributes to the translation

quality assessment of satire, especially in accuracy. A translator should produce adequate translation, which means reexpressing satire in TT. An adequate translation indicates the same degree of relevance as the result of the similar implicated conclusion. In other words, since satire is deliberately made implicit, the additional information of the satire in TT will decrease its aesthetic function and at the same time change the style of the author.

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