A STUDY OF THEATER OF THE ABSURD THROUGH THE CANNON OF RELEVANCE THEORY

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Abstract
Dan Sperber and Deirdre presented the relevance theory in 2012, which was the advanced version of Gricean Maxims. As per the theory, the language patterns used in any speech, dialogue, or communication has a specific relevance when inferred. It is considered as a psychological model as it uses cognitive approaches to study the communication stances. Hence, the research aims at finding the meaning in Absurd Theater by using relevance theory. For this purpose, the researchers study various works of Harold Pinter, and Becket and the dialogues are interpreted through the theory. The study has two hypotheses regarding illogical premises and the flouting of relevance maxim and in both cases relevance theory can solve the puzzle by putting meaning in illogical premises and by adding the piece of non-dualism in the case of flouting and opting out. In this way, the study has proved that the writings of absurd theater have a conception of non-dualism, no absolute truth in the writings of theater, Gricean maxims cannot help study the dialogues of absurdists, and the last one is about the role of non-dualism behind the writings of absurd theater. Besides that, the study also proved that Taoism is very related to the writings of Theater of the Absurd. The study recommends that other lineage of absurd theater can also be possible through finding its relations with different philosophical thoughts.
Keywords: Theater of Absurd, Non-Dualism, Relevance Theory, Absurdism

1. Introduction

Relevance theory (2012) by (Dan Sperber) and (Deirdre) is the advance form of Gricean Maxims, patterns of language possess certain relevance at inferential level. Relevance theory uses its cognitive approaches to study the different articulations embedded in communication, therefore it is named as psychological model. It interprets the language by using the psychological approaches, and by employing inferential approaches to pragmatics. Relevance is the evolved from Grecian maxims but it negates the old model of communication. The old model goes with message-based decoding and encoding. Whereas in inferential approach to pragmatics a message which is taken for granted is passed through the more particular abstract modes of perceptual notions of relevance. Linguistic meanings taken from different parts of subjective communications are known through the inferential pragmatics. Relevance theory holds the thought that it is the relevancy that affects the receiver rather than the content of the message itself. Classical model of communication (1975) takes a thought that message is itself enough to be communicated but inferential pragmatics holds a different percept.

Predominately the percept is that human being is cognitively more inclined towards relevance. Spoken or written messages carry information, information of same kind arranges itself in duality of diverse structures but the essence of relevance is nearly the same. Interactions among interlocutors possess their own substances of relevance, hearer draws his own inferences based on his/her own social cognition. Moreover, the hearer grasps the content of speaker as an input they get their relevance according to the inferences drawn by the hearer. Relevance theory has a relation with Paul Grice theory; it is the extension of Grecian theoretical ambit. Grecian theory is based on decoding method to figure out the hidden meaning whereas Sperber's approach is to figure out the

meaning through inferences. Secondly relevance theory is the extension of one of the maxims put forth by Grice under Cooperative principles.

Apparently, it is abstracted that the theater of absurd has a fragmentary nature but in closer analysis one can comprehend that part of communication are always organized in certain whole, meanings are known through inductive logic, appropriate generalizations lead to more close understandings. And through contextual analysis one can understand the relation among the parts and relation between the parts and whole.

The term theater of absurd was first put forth by Martin Esslin, (2002). The main idea that goes in the theater of absurd is to unfold the absurdity in the human condition. In their view everything appears in nothing and disappears in nothing. The origins of theater of absurd are rooted in remnants of the past and horrors of the world war. World war shows the impermanence of the human life. Traditional plays do follow the story which is closer to real life but absurd plays have nothing to do with real life obligations. Characters either does not move or do not talk or exchange hats for none. Meaningless things often appear to be incomprehensible therefore is called illogical, but in dense level of understanding the absurdity reveals the profound ideas for their audience. Horrors of Second World War shifted the thought process of mankind upside down. It merged and augmented the thought of non-duality

Relevance theory is a cognitive paradigm that uses linguistic conceptual grounds to rationalize the relevant structures used in the language. Through pragmatic inferencing 'implicature' can be known. Research has not yet been done using relevancy theory to study the theater of absurd. Through inferential approaches and different approaches of 'relevance theory' future researches can be made.

1.1. Research Objectives
Precisely the objective of this research is to vindicate those dialogues among characters that took place in absurd Literature can get their logical meaning under relevance theory

To explore the dialogues under the relevance theory

To rationalize relevance theory to comprehend the meaning of theater of absurd

1.2. Hypotheses
Basing upon above mentioned objectives the current study will try to prove or disprove the following hypotheses:

H-1

Illogical premises that appear without certain consistency can be made consistent and can be understood rationally under relevance theory through adding the non-dualism

H-2

In theater of absurd the relevance maxim is flouted, violated, and opted out by non-dualist people in their conversations because of nihilistic, and Taoist thoughts

1.3. Research Questions
a. What is the relationship of non-dualism and theater of the absurd?
b. How does the absurd literature have the same thoughts like Taoism and nihilism?

2. Data Analysis
Every text is written in certain time frame, and it follows certain cultural, social, and historical aspects in it. Non-dualists have a very fine appreciation for waiting for Godot, because they never agree with logical consistency. Cooperative principle discussed by Paul Grice does not amply hold in the context of waiting for Godot. For instance, Vladimir poses the question again and again in interrogative style and questions appears to be a query but is hardly answered by Estragon. Both

did not consider it obligatory to answer. And in non-dualist perspective nothing is obligatory. In the view of Grice providing adequate information or required information is essentially obligatory. If not than it will result in violation of maxims. Or if bluntly done leads to flouting. It can be said that through the framework of non-dualist perspective any existing pragmatic structure would be hard to be applied. Conversations by non-dualist do not fit in the framework of Grecian cooperative principles.

It is also thought that Albert Camus has a great influence of such absurdity in Literature. According to non-dual teaching sometimes to know the infinite self of oneself one has to drop his mind along with thoughts for a while to know the true self which is hidden under the layer of fictional or egoistic self.

Non-dualist thinks that peace is already there it has nothing to do with any outer form even in pain and fear it can be there. Through deep inner inquiry, non-dualist philosophers and sages have come to the realization that there is only one substance and we are therefore all part of it. This substance can be called Awareness moreover they call it as unchangeable and ever-present reality. Through relevance theory by Sperber even the absurdity can be understood around its relativity.

According to Sperber through language everything can be communicated even complexities and richly structured dictions can also be communicated through language. Every utterance can be meaningful if is seen the relevance with its context.

In relevance theory, the notion of mutual knowledge is replaced by the notion of mutual manifestness. It is enough, Sperber and Wilson argue, for the contextual assumptions needed in interpretation to be mutually manifest to communicator and addressee for communication to take place. Manifestness is defined as follows: 'a fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true' (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 39). The communicator and addressee do not need to mutually know the contextual assumptions required for interpretation. The addressee does not even have to have these assumptions stored in his memory. He must simply be able to construct them, either based on what he can perceive in his immediate physical environment, or because of assumptions already stored in memory. (Adrian Pilkington, Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Perspective. John Benjamins, 2000)

Camus is of view that absurdity is all over, the world is wrapped up in absurdity, and all human conditions are under the shadow of it, and to search for meaning is utterly meaningless. On conceptual grounds it can also be comprehended that absurdity and existentialism are interconnectivity at subjective sides of perception.

> As said by Sperber, the utterance is presumed to be the most relevant one compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences, and at least relevant enough to be worth the hearer's attention. (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/199595, p. 266-78)

Encoding of language is secondary conceptual encoding is primary, behind every linguistic structure there is a conceptual structure that is required to be abstracted, Sperber also agrees with this, therefore he stresses to know the context and after context the relevance can be known. Construction of language requires the appropriate comprehension, and comprehension can work if it has an inferential nature. Beckett came up with the constructions by following his inferential comprehension; discourse connectives that Grice employed were to uplift the idea of the meaningless life.

Moreover, implicature at theoretical level varies, at conventional level it is different whereas conversational implicature possesses its own distinguishing features for instance conversational

implicatures are not precisely coded or decoded but are inferred. On the hand conventional ones are semantically decoded. Additional meanings can either be inferred or decoding it depends, because one goes with Grecian maxims whereas other has nothing to do with Grecian maxims. In waiting for Godot both cases hold.

Communication requires information, even silence appears to be a piece of an information during an utterance, it comes in hedges or through the perceptual door of Grecian maxims it appears to be a violation or through Sperber theory it can also appear as a manner of utterance. Concepts have relative nature, at one site, they appear one and can be upside down, it wholly depends upon one's pragmatic perception.

Theater of absurd has its essence in Beckett's works, Camus's works, and Pinter's works. Moreover, Edward Albee – Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf (1962) and Vaclav Havel – The Memorandum (1965) and Edward Albee – Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf (1962) are also prominent works in theater of absurd.

Theater of absurd takes time as elastic and non-linear. The structure that these Dramas follow is the circular ending because they contain the repetition of events. Events that appear in these Dramas are arbitrary and unpredictable therefore in them plausibility and cause-and-effect are dissociated. Laws of nature are sacrificed in such inclination of literature as well as monotony of human existence is also sacrificed. The plot is nonlinear and possesses the nihilistic view of human existence. If the characters are studied without relevancy theory these dramas look mere a verbal nonsense designed under the literature of dream and fantasy.

Essence and form go together in analysis, relevancy is preliminary tool to study the hidden structures within language holding absurdity. Forms of absurdity vary from drama to drama or any other literary form but commonality which it shares is fragmentary sequel of plot whereas the essence which works as a tool to put under consideration of observer would be relevancy. Even within the absurd dramas the shared Phenomenon is a manifestation of essence, relevancy plainly applies on projected phenomenon shared in different clusters within drama, essence therefore remains general and relevancy theory grasps the essence, all phenomenon are the individuals in which essence is contained. The essence is something stable whereas phenomenon accidental in the theater of absurd. Relevancy theory starts from stable patterns to wavering trends of absurd Literature. The bond uniting all objects and processes in a single whole is universal in all the characters represented in Absurd plays.

3. Conclusion:

The study concluded that absurdist literature flout, and opt-out the maxims of relevancy and without adding the pieces of non-dualism, Taoism, and nihilism, the paradox of absurd dialogues cannot be solved. Hence, non-dualism, which includes Taoism, and nihilism are the foundation of absurd literature. That means both the hypotheses are proved.

4. Recommendations:

Research can be conducted on these dramas under relevancy theory:

Gogol's The Nose (1836)

The Fall (1956)

Harold Pinter The Room (1957), The Dumb Waiter (1957), The Caretaker (1960).

Max Frisch – The Firebugs (1953)

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