

# **LANGUAGE IN INDIA**

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## **COMPUTER NOT LOCALIZED!**

**TRANSLATING INDIAN LANGUAGES FOR  
GLOBALIZATION - A CASE STUDY OF MALAYALAM**

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#### **Globalization and Localization**

Globalization is a process of designing or redesigning a product so that it can be localized with minimal changes.

“With the advent of globalization the scope and need for localization has multiplied. Any product, concept, ideas, method and technology have to target a much bigger audience to be globally competitive, successful and sustainable. Localization includes not only a simple translation of text from one language to another, but also the adjustment of the product contents and appearance to the socio-cultural context and functional needs of the target audience- and all while maintaining the products’ unique character, its code integrity and the message it conveys. According to a leading consortium on localization, LISA (Localization Standards Industry Organization), “Localization is the process of adapting a product (often but not always a software application or hardware component) to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific target environment or market ( a ‘locale’).” <http://www.diaspark.com/includes/docs/Localization.pdf>

This article mainly discusses some of the issues in localizing the computer terminologies. The language of discussion is Malayalam. Localization of computer terminology is really a welcoming attempt because through localization every Indian can exploit the power of computers and connect to the world, as dreamt by webduniya.com. But it is not an easy task because computer, which is of foreign origin, the terms are coined either from English or from the foreign concepts. The equivalent terms in this list are coined as per the Microsoft guideline suggestions and according to the description given for each term in the term list provided.

For the equivalent selection the following modes are adopted;

- 1) Word to word translation
- 2) Transliteration
- 3) Content translation

#### **1. Word to word translation**

For some of the terms given, the content description and the English terms given were of much similarity and more over the idea was also familiar in the target language, in such cases mere word to word translation of the English terms is adopted to get the equivalent.

For example:

English terms	Malayalam equivalents	Description
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	given	
<i>progress indicator</i>	<i>puroogati suucakam</i>	feed back that provides the user with information about the state of a process
<i>upper case letter</i>	<i>uccaśreeNi akṣaram</i>	In some languages, a distinct and usually larger form of a letter may be used in word initial position in certain cases, or for emphasis.
<i>System clock</i>		The electronic circuit in a computer that generates steady stream of timing pulses-the digital signals that synchronize every operation.
<i>Character style</i>	<i>pratiika śaili</i>	A combination of any of the character formatting options identified by a style name.
<i>Color depth</i>	<i>varNatiivrata</i>	The range of color values available to an image.

## 2. Transliteration

There are many instances where transliteration is used to localize the term. Some of the English terms which are commonly accepted in the Malayalam language are only transliterated. Even the term computer is only transliterated. And we should yet find an apt equivalent for this in Malayalam language.

Examples

Computer > *kampyu:TTeR*

Credit card > *kReDiRRə ka:RDə*

Package > *pakke:jə*

Account manager > *akkaunTə ma:ne:jeR*

## 3. Abbreviation

Malayalam language accepts the English abbreviation and only transliterates the abbreviated form. Therefore the abbreviated terms given were only transliterated even though the expanded forms of the same were translated into Malayalam.

Example:

The abbreviated terms

*PII* is transliterated into Malayalam, where as the expanded form of the same *Personally Identifiable Information* is translated as *vyaktiparama:ya tiriccaRiyal vivaram*.

*TCP* is transliterated where as the expanded form *Transmission Control Protocol* is translated as *prakṣeepaNā niyantraNā peruma:RracaTTam*

This method is adopted to retain the usual pattern of Malayalam language. If one deviate from the original pattern and give the abbreviation as *vyativi* or *pranipe*, it will look strange.

#### 4. Content translation

The concept of Computer is foreign and there fore most of the terminology related to this is new in Indian context. In such a situation one cannot adopt word-to-word translation because of the non availability of the term in the target language. Here one should coin a new term in accordance with the description given for that particular term.

Examples:

English	Description	Suggested equivalents in Malayalam
<i>hyperlink</i>	A predefined linkage between one object and another. The link is displayed either as text or as icon on web pages, a text hyperlink displays as underlined text, while a graphical hyperlink is a small graphics image of any size and shape	<i>gamanapadham</i> 'a traceable path'
<i>pixel</i>	The basic unit of the composition of an image on a television screen, computer monitor or similar display	<i>citrattari</i> 'picture particle'
<i>monitor</i>	The television-like hardware that includes a screen.	<i>druśyaja:lakam</i> 'visual window'
<i>hang</i>	Stop responding	<i>mayan̄juka</i> 'dozing'
<i>server</i>	A dedicated computer on a network that serves or delivers something, usually to other computers called clients.	<i>se:va:da:yakan</i> (സേവദായകൻ) 'service provider'

#### 5. Other types of coinages

As per the guidelines given for choosing glossary terminology one should choose a short translation rather than a long one. The reason for this is the limited space in the software. But while translating some of the words one cannot stick on this.

For example, the term *debug* in computer terminology means ‘to detect, locate and correct logical or syntactical errors in a program’. In Malayalam the equivalent term suggested is *teRRukaL kaNTetti tiruttuka*, which is really a long translation. But as far as Malayalam language is concerned one cannot coin a small word like that of in English.

In another example the term *macro*, which means ‘a set of key strokes and instructions recorded and saved as a key combination (such as CTRL+X) or file name. When the macro is used, all of the recorded steps are performed automatically. Macros save time by replacing a series of frequently performed steps with a simple key combination or name’ has given the equivalent as *sammiśra pravarttana nirdee:śam* that is relatively longer than the target word.

The term *buffer* is used in computer to represent ‘an area of memory reserved for temporarily holding data before that data is used by a receiving device or application’. There is no equivalent short term for this in Malayalam therefore one should go for the term *ta:tkā:lika śe:kham*, which is coined from the content and is little bit longer than the English equivalent.

In such conditions one cannot follow the guidelines precisely because of the language specific characters. Here if one want to strictly follow the guidelines it is better to transliterate the term. But this is not a welcoming trend because Malayalam language is already overwhelming with many borrowed terms from English and Sanskrit. In this condition if we can coin a new term in Malayalam it will definitely enrich the language.

## **6. The term *marquee***

According to the term description given is a ‘moving text that is used on a data access page to draw the user’s attention to a specific page element such as a headline or an important announcement.’

According to the dictionary definition,

1. A large tent, often with open sides, used chiefly for outdoor entertainment.
2. A roof like structure, often bearing a signboard, projecting over an entrance, as to a theater or hotel.

To coin an equivalent term for this, one should consider three aspects, namely, description of the term, real meaning of the word, and also the real function.

For *marquee*, if we coin the equivalent term from the word *tent*, it won’t convey the function because it is not necessary that the tent should always move or should always be attractive. Therefore the word *tooraNam*, which means ‘decoration or triumphal arch’ and which is mainly kept to attract people, is suggested.

The guidelines also suggest that one should select one translation per concept to prevent a future situation where two different English terms have the same translation in the same dialog box. There fore the terms *start* which means ‘the process of starting or resetting a computer’ and *boot* which means ‘to start or reset a computer by turning the power on’ should be translated differently even though the description given for these terms are same. For these words the suggested translation is *a:rambham* ‘commencement’ and *pra:rambham*, ‘beginning’ respectively.

Other examples for this kind of situation is

English	Description	Suggested Malayalam equivalent
1.Add-in	A device that is traditionally added to the base computer system to increase functionality, such as audio, networking, graphics or SCSI controller.	<i>anubandham</i> ‘appendix’
Add-on	A device that is traditionally added to the base computer system to increase functionality, such as audio, networking, graphics or SCSI controller.	<i>ku:TTicce:Rkkal</i> ‘addition’
2.Access code	A secret string of characters that lets users log on to computer and access files, programs, and other resources. Passwords help to ensure that unauthorized users do not use the computer.	<i>prave:sana sanke:tam</i> ‘entering code’
Password	A secret string of characters that lets users log on to computer and access files, programs, and other resources. Passwords help to ensure that unauthorized users do not use the computer.	<i>rahasyava:kkə</i> ‘secret code’
3.Allocation unit	The smallest amount of disk space that can be allocated to hold a file.	<i>anuvadita e:kakam</i> ‘allocation unit’
cluster	The smallest amount of disk space that can be allocated to hold a file.	<i>e:kakaru:pam</i> ‘unit form’

Localization of technical terminology necessitates a thorough knowledge in both technology and language. A multidirectional approach is necessary to coin an equivalent term. In Computer the localized terms should equally be software friendly and people friendly. As the guideline suggests one should select a word, which can have both verb and noun forms, to assure flexibility and promote easy use of the terms in the localized

software and documentation. Keeping all these things in mind one should find an equivalent term, which make the translated software easier for users to learn and navigate.

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