6.0. Distinctive Characteristics

Each language is unique by nature as it “possesses certain distinctive characteristics which give it a special character, e.g., word-building capacities, unique patterns of phrase order, techniques for linking clauses into sentences, markers of discourse, and special discourse types of poetry, proverbs, and song” (Nida & Taber 3-4). So a linguistic study on both the SL and the TL is the basic need for one who involves in translation. Translating a literary work from one language into another is not simply transferring the text from the SL into the TL because languages “differ in form” and “just do not correspond.”

Hence, a translator has to alter the forms in order to preserve the content. At the same time, Nida insists that the style is also important though it is “secondary to content” (13). Experts in the theories of translation state the difficulties in translating the figures of speech from an SL into a TL. Elaheh Fadaee opines that “translating figures of speech deals with finding secondary meaning in the source language (SL), and finding cultural meaning and appropriate equivalence in the target language (TL). Figures of speech and multi-word expressions are some of the most challenging translation difficulties” (1). This chapter is devoted to the study on the linguistic problems faced by the translators in translating the figures of speech and comparisons, while translating the Tirukkuṟaḷ from its SL Tamil into the TL English.

6.1. Stylistic features

Tiruvaḷḷuvar beautifies his couplets with many stylistic features of the Tamil language where the usage of etukai ‘rhyme’ and figures of speech dominate all the other features. Unlike the TL English, the rhyme scheme of the SL Tamil resists in the beginning of the lines of the poems. The author simply plays with words. Almost
all the couplets are coined with one or the other figure of speech. Also, he uses comparisons and imageries to entrust virtues of life. He uses the relevant figures of speech to express his ideas in the couplets with poetic grace. The couplets are enriched with similes, metaphors, alliteration, antithesis and many other figures of speech. Translating a figure of speech into the TL without changing its form is not easy for the translators, while translating a literary work into the TL.

6.2. Descriptive Comparisons

As Tiruvalḷuvar uses comparisons to enhance the values and principles of day to day life, he uses imageries and figures of speech like metaphor, simile, personification and parable which are familiar in the SL Tamil, to express them. As the SL differs from the TL in every aspect, translating the stylistic elements such as comparisons and figures of speech from the SL into the TL causes real problem to the translators of the *Tirukkuṟṟa*. When the metaphors are considered, some are untranslatable while others are translatable. While discussing the translatability and untranslatability of some metaphors, Andre Lefevre is of the opinion:

Translators may have to adapt or substitute accordingly, but they should do so only as the last resort since one characteristic of metaphor is that it requires some flexibility of mind to be understood and that it can impart a similar flexibility on the target language. Since flexibility is always a good thing, translators might do well to consider the potential benefits of the “unacceptable” before rejecting it. (37)

Narain too, points out the “problems of translation of imaginative material, including the use of metaphors, similes, comparisons etc.,” in literary translations (101). But the select translators follow their own ways in substituting one or the other figure of
speech or descriptive phrases or clauses to their translated versions and succeed in rendering the English versions of the "Tirukkuṟaḷ".

6.3. Metaphors in Comparison

In discussing the problem of untranslatability, Ali R. Al-Hasnawi states that, “translation of ‘metaphor’ has been treated as part of the more general problem of ‘untranslatability.’ This trend builds on the fact that metaphors in general are associated with ‘indirectness,’ which in turn contributes to the difficulty of translation” (1). As metaphors reveal the socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes of a specific culture, translating them from SL into the TL poses problems to the translators.

Tiruvaḷḷuvār employs metaphor in some of his couplets. The eighth couplet of the first chapter enriches with two metaphors aravāḷī which means “the ocean of virtue” and aravāḷī antāṇaṉ which means the “god who is the ocean of virtue.”

\[
\text{aravāḷī yantaṇaṉ rāḷcerntārk kallār}
\]

\[
pīṟavāḷī nīnta laritu. (8)
\]

(Unless His feet, ‘the Sea of Good, the Fair and the Bountiful,’ men gain,
‘Tis hard the further bank of being’s changeful sea to attain. [Pope])
(The stormy seas of wealth and sense delights cannot be traversed except by those who cling to the feet of the Sage who is the Ocean of Righteousness. [Aiyar])
(Unless the feet of the sea of virtue’s sage you gain,
The shore of the sea of births you can’t attain. [Sreenivasan])
(Only those who cling to His gracious feet cross the seas of mundane life. [Iyengar])
(The feet of the Lord with the Virtue-wheel

Will help to cross the sea of birth. [Sundaram])

Pope translates the term $\text{aravāḷi} \text{yantaṇa}ñ \text{rāḷ}$ together as “His feet, ‘the Sea of Good, the Fair and the Bountiful,’ where the metaphor $\text{aravāḷi}$ is translated into the TL while he ignores the other metaphor $\text{aravāḷi}\text{yantaṇa}ñ$. Aiyar and Sreenivasan translate both the metaphors and help the readers grasp the complete content of the couplet. Iyengar transforms both the metaphors into sense and succeeds in rendering the couplet in the TL. Sundaram translates $\text{aravāḷi} \text{yantaṇa}ñ$ as “the Lord with the ‘Virtue –wheel’” in which he substitutes the word “wheel” for “ocean or sea” with added notes that “ocean of virtue” and “wheel of virtue” are one and same to justify his use of the term “the Lord with the ‘Virtue –wheel’.” The translators’ difficulties are due to the lack of equivalents in the TL and availability of various synonyms for the SL word. Literary translation is the hardest task in the field of translation. Translating any figure of speech into the TL, as it is in the SL, is even more critical to any translator, however much he or she is well-versed in the languages.

Another metaphor $\text{piṟavip peruṅkaṭaḷ}$ which means “the ocean of birth” is used in the tenth couplet by the author.

$\text{piṟavip peruṅkaṭaḷ} \text{gīṇtuvar nīntā}$

$rīṟaiva \text{ṇaṭicerā tār}$. (10)

(They swim the sea of births, the ‘Monarch’s’ foot who gain;
None others reach the shore of being’s mighty main. [Pope])
(They alone cross the ocean of births and deaths who take refuge in the feet of the Lord: the others traverse it not. [Aiyar])
(They swim the sea of births who gain,
His feet; no others the shores attain. [Sreenivasan])

(None else but those that attain His feet can
cross the sea of birth and death. [Iyengar])

(Those can cross the ocean of births
Who hold God’s feet, without which none. [Sundaram])

This metaphor is translated as “the sea of births” or “the ocean of births” into the TL as that of the SLT by all the select translators while Iyengar translates it as “the sea of birth and death” where an addition of the word “death” is made along with the translation of the metaphor. This may be for the belief that “one could reach the feet of god only after one’s death.” And while reading the translated version of this particular couplet by Iyengar, a reader can grasp the intended meaning of the SL couplet.

The metaphor found in the 90th couplet is a comparison of the disappointed guests to that of the withered anicca flower.

\[
\text{mōppak kuḷaiyum aniccam mukantirintu}
\]
\[
\text{nōkkak kuḷaiyum viruntu. (90)}
\]

(The flower of the ‘anicca’ withers away,
If you do but its fragrance inhale;
If the face of the host cold welcome convey,
The guest’s heart within him will fail. [Pope])

(The anicha flower fadeth when thou holdest it near the nose and smellest it:
but a mere reluctant look is enough to break the heart of the guest. [Aiyar])

(Anicha flower fades when smelt,
So fades the guest cold welcome spelt. [Sreenivasan])
(The denied guest withers, like *anicha/* drooping on being inhaled. [Iyengar])

(The *anicham* withers when smelt:

A cold look withers a guest.  [Sundaram])

Except Iyengar, all the select translators translate the metaphor as metaphor while translating the couplet of the SLT into the TL. Yet Pope translates the SL couplet which is in the form of a compound sentence with two main clauses into two complex sentences; and makes the couplet quite long and verbose and seems to affirm the statements of Sundaram. Iyengar translates the metaphor into simile.

The first couplet in the 41st chapter has a metaphor of comparing the illiterates who did not learn valuable books to the act of playing a game called *vaṭṭāṭtam* without having the checked court (an outdoor game played with terracotta or stone tablets on a checked court).

\[ \text{araṅkinir viṭṭtiyarrē nirampiya} \]

\[ \text{nūlinir köṭṭik koḷal. (401)} \]

(Like those at draughts would play without the chequered square,

Men void of ample lore would counsels of the learned share. [Pope])

(Ascending the rostrum without abundant knowledge is like the playing of dice without the chequered board. [Aiyar])

(Playing chess without a board, compare,

To the ignorant who learned counsels share. [Sreenivasan])

(As well play chess without the board, as speak with no learning to the wise. [Iyengar])

(To address an assembly ill-equipped

Is to play at dice without a board. [Sundaram])
Pope, Aiyar and Iyengar translate the couplet by retaining the same figure of speech as that of the SLT. But, Sreenivasan makes a comparison without beautifying it with the figure of speech and Sundaram translates the couplet by transforming the simile into metaphor. But, none of the select translators use the name of the actual game vatṭāṭṭam in their translated versions. As an equivalent game is quite impossible in the western countries where the climatic conditions differ from that of Tamil Nadu; and so equivalent name or game too is not possible. Hence they substitute the names of the games which are familiar in the English speaking countries.

The 452nd couplet has a metaphor, comparing the nature of one’s companionship which alters one’s characteristics as the quality of the soil that changes the characteristics of water flowthrough it.

\textit{nilattiyalpā ṝṛtirin tarpāku māntark}
\textit{kinattiyalpa tāku marivu. (452)}

(The waters’ virtues change with soil through which they flow; As man’s companionship so will his wisdom show. [Pope])

(Water altereth and taketh the character of the soil through which it floweth: even so the mind taketh the colour of the company with which it consorteth. [Aiyar])

(Water’s nature by the soil’s known; Man’s wisdom by his friends is shown. [Sreenivasan])

(Water imbibes the soil’s nature; men are moulded by their company. [Iyengar])

(The soil colours water, and one’s company One’s mind. [Sundaram])
Here, the comparison is the implied simile or metaphor where the nature or the character of one depends upon the nature of one’s company as the quality of water alters due to the nature of the soil through which it flows. All the select translators except Pope translate the couplet without changing the metaphor, and Pope alters the metaphor into simile.

The 49th chapter is also enriched with the figures of speech which insist on the importance of selecting the proper time to do a task. The first couplet of this chapter has a metaphor, where the author compares the victory of a king who selects appropriate time to conquer his enemies to the triumph of crow over owl in daylight.

\[ pakalvelluñ kūkaiyaik kākkai yikalvellum \]
\[ vēntarkku vēntum poḷutu. (481) \]

(A crow will conquer owl in broad daylight;)

The king that foes would crush, needs fitting time to fight. [Pope])

(The crow triumpheth over the owl when it is day: even so opportunity is a great thing to the prince who would vanquish his enemy. [Aiyar])

(A crow can beat an owl by day; to fight

His foes, a king should choose his time aright. [Sreenivasan])

(In daylight a crow beats the owl: a King

at war should thus choose his time. [Iyengar])

(A crow can defeat an owl by day;

Kings need the right time to win. [Sundaram])

Regarding this particular metaphor, no translator deviates from the SLT while translating the couplet into the TL. All the select translators give priority to the figure of speech and they translate it retaining the metaphor in the TL too. They follow
their own ways of translating the couplet but without deviating from the content, meaning, form and style of the SLT.

Tiruvalḷuvar uses another metaphor in the 50th chapter entitled īṭañgarital ‘knowing the right place.’ The sixth couplet has a metaphor; comparing the nature of the car or chariot which runs on the land cannot be sailed in the sea, to the boat or ship which sails on the sea cannot be run on the land.

kaṭalōṭā kālva ṇeṭuntēr kaṭalōṭu
nāvāyu mōṭaa nilattu. (496)

(The lofty car, with mighty wheel, sails not o’er watery main,
The boat that skims the sea, runs not on earth’s hard plain. [Pope])
(The strong-wheeled chariot runneth not on the sea; for saileth not the ocean going ship, on dry land. [Aiyar])
(The lofty car with strong wheels will not sail,
Sea-going ships, on land will fail. [Sreenivasan])
(The wheeled chariot speeds not on the sea,
and the ship sails not on land. [Iyengar])
(The crocodile wins in deep waters -
Coming out others win against it. [Sundaram])

Here, all the select translators translate the same figure of speech metaphor into metaphor while translating the couplet from its SL into the TL.

In the 595th couplet too, Tiruvalḷuvar uses the figure of speech metaphor comparing the length of the stem of the water plant which is up to the water level to the dignity of man which depends up on his mind or will.

veḷḷat taṇaiya malarniṭṭa māntartam / mullṭat taṇaiya tuyarvu. (595)
(With rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds;
The dignity of men is measured by their minds. [Pope])

(The water with which a plant is watered is the measure of the luxuriance of
its flower: even so, the spirit of a man is the measure of his fortunes. [Aiyar])

(With rising flood, the lotus stalk extends,
On mind, the dignity of man depends. [Sreenivasan])

(The lotus gets its bloom from water; Man
earns his greatness from his will. [Iyengar])

(The lotus rises with the water, / And a man as high as his will. [Sundaram])

Here too, all the select translators translate the couplet by translating the figure of
speech metaphor into metaphor.

Also two metaphors kāmak kaṇicci ‘the axe of overpowering love’ and
nāṇuttāḻ ‘the bolt of modesty’ are used by the author in the 1251st couplet.

kāmak kaṇicci yuṭaikku niraiyēṇṇu
nāṇuttāḻ vīltta katavu. (1251)

(The princess has long repressed her feelings. She resolves to implore his return, and
says:

Of womanly reserve love’s axe breaks through the door,
Barred by the bolt of shame before. [Pope])

(The door that is bolted with the bolt of modesty will yet yield to the axe of
an Overpowering love. [Aiyar])

(Love’s battle axe breaks through the door,
Barred by the bolt of modesty before. [Sreenivasan])

(The bolt of my virgin modesty’s door
gives way to the axe of love. [Iyengar])

(Love the axe breaks down the bolted door

Of bashful reserve. [Sundaram])

The metaphor कामक kāmak kaṇicci is translated as a metaphor “love’s axe” into the TL by all the select translators. But, while translating the other metaphor nāṇuttāl, it creates problem to the translators since the word nāṇam is a cultural word for which the equivalent will not be available in the western languages and in the TL English. As translating the metaphor will not be easy to the translators whether they are foreigners or native translators, the select translators substitute one or the other word which is close to the SL word and translate the metaphor into the TL. For the word tāl, all the select translators use the word bolt, but for nāṇam, they substitute the words “shame,” or “modesty.” But Iyengar makes an addition of the word “virgin” and translates the metaphor as “virgin modesty’s door” though there is no such word in the SLT. Also, Sundaram deletes the metaphor in his translation.

Translating the metaphors found in the couplets of the Tirukkural too creates problems to the translators, as “they have no choice other than replacing the SL image with a TL image that does not clash with the target culture” (Al-Hasnawi n.pag.). Based on the procedures of translating a metaphor, it can be translated by reproducing the same image in the TL, or replacing images in the SL with a standard TL image, or translating a metaphor by simile, retaining the image of the SL. And, the select translators follow one or the other means of translating the metaphor into the TL by using the ways and means which they feel comfortable and appropriate to bring out the TLT.
6.3. Simile in Comparison

Among the stylistic features used in the couplets, Tiruvaḷḷuvar uses many similes in the couplets of the *Tirukkural*. Translating the figure of speech, simile, into the TL is not an easy task, because the stylistic features of a language differ from those of another. Yet, the select translators translate the similes by maintaining the form and structure if possible and by substituting other forms of sentence structures wherever needed. There is a simile *uraṇṇuṇ tōṭiyāṅ* (knowledge like the one who controls the elephants with elephant goad) in the 24th couplet, which poses problem to the translators in translating the simile from the SL into a simile in the TL due to its usage in comparison.

*uraṇṇuṇ tōṭiyāṅ ṇōraitun kāppāṅ

*varāṇṇuṇ vaippukkōr vittu.* (24)

(He, who with firmness’ curb the five restrains,
Is seed for soil of yonder happy plains. [Pope])

(Behold the man whose firm will controlleth his five senses even as the goading hook controlleth the elephant:
he is a seed fit for the fields of heaven. [Aiyar])

(His senses five, with strength restrains,
Is seed in the soil of heavenly plains. [Sreenivasan])

(One whose wisdom keeps his senses in check merits a place in heaven. [Iyengar])

(He sows the seed of bliss who rules
His five senses with wisdom’s goad. [Sundaram])
The author of the SLT uses this simile along with an indirect comparison of the five senses to those of five elephants which are controlled by the one who has the power to control one’s own five senses. Pope translates it as “he, who with firmness’ curb the five restrains” where he leaves out the indirect comparison of the five senses to five elephants as well as the simile. On the other hand Aiyar succeeds in translating it as “the man whose firm will controllleth his five senses even as the goading hook controlleth the elephant” without avoiding the comparison and simile. And among the rest of the select translators, Sreenivasan and Iyengar ignore the hidden comparison and simile in their translations, while Sundaram translates the hidden comparison in a concealed manner.

The simile used in the 29th couplet *kuṇameṇṇuṅ kunrō* is translated in different ways by the translators.

*kuṇameṇṇuṅ kunrēri ninrār vekuḷi*

*kaṇamēyuṅ kātta laritu.*\(^{(29)}\)

(The wrath ‘tis hard e’en for an instant to endure
Of those who virtue’s hill have scaled, and stand secure. [Pope])

(It is impossible to support even for a moment the wrath of those who stand on the rock of renunciation. [Aiyar])

(On virtue’s hill who stand secure,
Their anger’s difficult to endure. [Sreenivasan])

(No anger can abide with those that have scaled and stand firm on Virtue. [Iyengar])

(The wrath of those on virtue’s hill,
Though brief, must have its way. [Sundaram])
Pope, Sreenivasan and Sundaram translate the simile as “virtue’s hill.” Aiyar translates it as “rock of renunciation;” while Iyengar deletes the comparison and uses the term “virtue” alone for kuṇameyyuṇu kuru, which leads to discussion since the equivalent English word offered for the Tamil word aṟam is “virtue” by almost all the translators. The word kuṇam is the common word used for all the good qualities one ought to have, and the word “virtue” too comprises all the good qualities though they are not the exact meaning of each other. But renunciation is one of the good such qualities which a godly or holy personality is expected to have. While translating the simile kuṇameyyuṇu kuru, none of the select translators translate it into a simile in the TL. Though they translate the term into the TL, beauty of the figure of speech, the simile, is lost in their translations. Aiyar’s substitution of the word “renunciation” for the word kuṇam lacks in the sense and meaning of the SLT.

In the 54th couplet, a simile karpeṇṇun tiṇmai is used by the author. The translation of this simile is problematic to the translators as the words karpu, which stands for all the virtues and good qualities of a woman, and tiṇmai which means strength of mind, are pure cultural words which have no equivalent words in the TL English. According to the Tamil Moli-Akarathi (Tamil-Tamil Dictionary), the word karpu has multi-layers of meanings such as “education, imagination, rules and regulations, fence, doctrines and so on. But the contextual meaning of this word in this couplet is the virtuous life of a wife with single-mindedness.

peṇnir peruntakka yāvuḷa karpeṇṇun
tiṇmaiyun ṭakap perin. (54)

(If woman might of chastity retain,
What choicer treasure doth the world contain? [Pope])
(What is there that is grander than woman, when she is strong in the strength of her chastity. [Aiyar])

(No greater treasure, the world contains

Than woman who chastity maintains. [Sreenivasan])

(The world has nothing nobler than a wife

with the Grace of chastity. [Iyengar])

(What can excel a woman / Who is rooted in chastity. [Sundaram])

Pope translates the simile karpeṭṭun tiṇmai into the TL as “chastity retain,”

Sreenivasan as “woman who chastity maintains” and Sundaram as “who is rooted in chastity.” These select translators except Aiyar translate the simile by following descriptive method of translation but not in the form of simile. Aiyar alone maintains translating the simile into the TL English in the form of a simile as “strong in the strength of her chastity.” By translating the simile in their own descriptive manner, without keeping the structure of the SLT, the select translators except Aiyar render their translated versions of the couplet with the figure of speech simile.

The 59th couplet too has a simile ēṟupōḷ pīṭu naṭai, where Tiruvaḷḷuvar compares the proud march of the man to the walking of a lion. At the same time, this simile is used in the negative sense as this ēṟupōḷ pīṭu naṭai is denied to those whose wives never bother virtuous life.

pukalpurin tillōrk killai ikalvārmug

ēṟupōḷ pīṭu naṭai. (59)

(Who have not spouses that in virtue’s praise delight,

They lion-like can never walk in scorners’ sight. [Pope])
(Behold the man whose home beareth not an honourable reputation: the proud, lion-like walk in the sight of distracters is denied to him. [Aiyar])

(The lion like cannot walk in scorners’ sight,
Whose wives care not for virtue’s might. [Sreenivasan])

(Wanting a chaste wife, he is no lion / before his base revilers. [Iyengar])

(Not his before scoffers a leonine gait
Whose wife scorns a good name. [Sundaram])

Pope, Aiyar, Sreenivasan and Sundaram translate the simile as simile into the TL without changing the form and content, while Iyengar brings out only a part of the comparison, as he omits the “proud walk” of the lion in his translation.

Tiruvalluvar uses a simile kōṟṟaṇṇa vīṇṇā in his 109th couplet. Here, he compares the harm iṇṇā to the act of killing kōṟṟaṇṇa i.e. like killing (kollutal).

kōṟṟaṇṇa vīṇṇā ceyigu mavarceita

vōṟṟunath rullak keṭum. (109)

(Effaced straightway is deadliest injury,
By thought of one kind act in days gone by. [Pope])

(The mortallest injury is forgiven the moment the mind recalleth a single kindness receiveth from the injurer. [Aiyar])

(A deadly hurt is soon effaced,
If by past gratitude is graced. [Sreenivasan])

(The thought of one benefit will dissolve all later murderous hurts. [Iyengar])

(Deadly though one’s sting, one’s one good deed Remembered acts as balm. [Sundaram])
Pope translates the simile *konranṉa vingā* into a phrase “deadliest injury,” Aiyar as “mortallest injury,” Sreenivasan as “deadly hurt,” Iyengar as “murderous hurts” and Sundaram as “deadly though one’s sting.” Though the select translators translate the simile in their own ways without transforming the simile of the SLT as a simile in the TLT, they use various synonyms or related terms to the words used in the simile of the SLT and render the sense or the content of the SLT into the TLT.

Tiruvaḷḷuvar uses another simile which compares “the balance rod which rightly weighs” to “the unbiased one who does not diverge from the act of just” in the 118th couplet.

*camanceytu cūrūkkuṅ kōlpōl amaintorupāl*

*kōṭāmai cāṅrōrk kāni.* (118)

(To stand, like balance rod that level hangs and rightly weighs,
With calm unbiased equity of soul, is sages’ praise. [Pope])

(Behold the weighing beam, for it is straight in itself and weigheth justly:
the glory of the wise is to be like unto it and to incline neither to this side nor to that. [Aiyar])

(Like scales that even rest and fair, / Not taking sides is sages’ wear.
[Sreenivasan])

(What marks the wise is their equality,
unswerving like weighing scales. [Iyengar])

(Like a just balance are the great-
Poised truly and unbiased. [Sundaram])

The select translators translate the objects of comparison *camanceytu cūrūkkuṅ kōl* in various ways. Pope translates it as “balance rod that level hangs and rightly
weighs,” Aiyar as “the weighing beam, for it is straight in itself and weigheth justly,” Sreenivasan as “scales that even rest and fair,” Iyengar as “weighing scales” and Sundaran as “a just balance.” And the nature of the righteous man amaintorupāl kōṭāmai cāṅrōrk kaṇi is translated as “with calm unbiased equity of soul, is sages’ praise” by Pope, “the glory of the wise is to be like unto it and to incline neither to this side nor to that” by Aiyar, “not taking sides is sages’ wear” by Sreenivasan, “what marks the wise is their equality” by Iyengar and “the great- poised truly and unbiased” by Sundaram in which he omits the word ani. Aiyar makes an addition for attracting the attention of the readers by addressing as “behold.” Though the select translators render the couplets in the TL English, not all the words of the couplet are translated into the TL.

Meenakshisundaram (1999) wrote about “three famous similes which describe three ever-increasing stages of self-sacrifice” while writing about the social behavior of man (81). Three couplets of the twenty-second chapter entitled oppuravarītal (knowledge of social obligation) are rich with the figure of speech, similes. Tiruvaḷḷuvar insists on the same concept in the three similes; but with different comparisons, they show a vast difference from one another.

In the 215th couplet, “the wealth of the great men of wisdom and comprehension” is compared to “the full brimming water reservoir of the village which is useful to the villagers.”

ūruṇi nīrniṟain taṟrē yulakavām
pēraṟi vāḷaṇ tiru. (215)
(The wealth of men who love the ‘fitting way,’ the true wise, is as when water fills the lake that village needs supplies. [Pope])
(Behold the village tank filled with water to its brim: like unto it is the prosperity of the wise man that loveth the world. [Aiyar]

(The wealth of liberal men who’re truly wise,
Like tank, when filled, the village needs supplies. [Sreenivasan])

(The wise man of benevolence is like / a tank’s life-giving waters. [Iyengar])

(The wealth of a wise philanthropist / Is a village pond ever full. [Sundaram])

The wealth of the wise philanthropist is like the brimming water of the village water reservoir, which is useful for those who seek it. Like that, the wealth of the wise is useful only to others who are in need. All the select translators except Sundaram translate the simile of the SLT into a simile in the TLT, while Sundaram transforms the simile into metaphor in his translation.

The simile of the next couplet expresses another concept of philanthropy. Unlike the simile of the previous couplet, where the needy ought to go and take water, here in this simile, the help comes to the midst of those who need it. The man who helps in need is compared to the fruit-bearing tree full of ripen fruits in the very heart of the village.

*payañmara muñürp paḷuttarrār celva

nayaṇṭai yāṅkaṭ paṭiṇ. (216)

(A tree that fruits in th’ hamlet’s central mart,
Is wealth that falls to men of liberal heart. [Pope])

(Like unto a fruit –tree in the middle of the village bearing fruit is riches in the hands of the man of heart. [Aiyar ])

(Liberal hearts that wealth acquire,
like fruitful trees in a village square. [Sreenivasan])
(A generous man’s wealth is like ripe fruit / on a tree, open to all. [Iyengar])

(The wealth of a liberal man / Is a village tree full-laden. [Sundaram])

Aiyar, Sreenivasan and Iyengar translate the simile into simile while Pope and Sundaram transform the simile into metaphor without changing the concept and content.

The next couplet has yet another simile which exaggerates the generosity of the person who sacrifices all his possessions and even his own self for the sake of others. Here, the wealth of the philanthropist is compared to an easily approachable medicine tree completely used as medicine for curing the sick.

\[maruntākit tappā marattarrār celvam\]

\[peruntakai yāgkaṭ paṭiṇg. (217)\]

(Unfailing tree that healing balm distils from every part, Is ample wealth that falls to him of large and noble heart. [Pope])

(Like unto a tree that yieldeth medicinal drugs and is available to all is riches in the hands of the obliging man. [Aiyar])

(A noble heart with open palm; Like a tree that yields a healing balm. [Sreenivasan])

(Like a balm-giving tree is the rich man who shares his largesse with all. [Iyengar])

(The wealth of the large-hearted / Is an unfailing medicine tree. [Sundaram])

Aiyar, Sreenivasan and Iyengar translate the figure of speech simile into simile from the SLT into the TLT while Pope and Sundaram translate the simile into metaphor.

In the 28th chapter entitled \[kūṭāvalukkam\] which means “indiscipline or immorality,” Tiruvalluvar uses many comparisons out of which three similes are
famous for their objects of comparison. The third couplet of this chapter has a comparison, where the man who does not have the capacity or strength to overpower his own mind is compared to the grazing animal which is hidden in the skin of the tiger.

\[ \textit{valiyi nilaimaiyān valluruvam perram} \]

\[ \textit{puliyingōl pōrtumein āṟṟu.} \] (273)

(As if a steer should graze wrapped round with tiger’s skin,
Is show of virtuous might when weakness lurks within. [Pope])

(Behold the man who hath not attained mastery over himself putting on the puissant look of the austere: he is like a cow that grazeth about wearing a tiger’s skin. [Aiyar])

(A show of might when fear lurks within,
As a cow that grazes in a tiger’s skin. [Sreenivasan])

(The sinner with a saint’s façade is like / a cow with a tiger’s skin. [Iyengar])

(A weakling in a giant’s form / Is an ox grazing in a tiger’s skin. [Sundaram])

All the select translators except Sundaram translate the couplet preserving the figure of speech in their translated versions as it is in the SLT. But Sundaram, on the other hand, transfers the simile of the SLT into metaphor in the TL version. Though translating the figures of speech creates problems to the translators in translating them by maintaining the same form in the TL, the select translators except Sundaram retain the same figure of speech in their translations, while Sundaram transforms the simile into metaphor. Also, the name of the grazing animal is not mentioned in the SLT though it is given as “cow” in the commentaries of the famous commentators like Parimelazhagar and Subbu Reddiyar (82, 56). Aiyar, Sreenivasan and Iyengar
use the name of the animal “cow,” while Pope and Sundaram alter the gender of the animal and use the words “steer” and “ox.”

The next couplet too has a comparison where the author compares the misdeed of an ascetic to the bird-hunter who hides in the bush and ties the birds.

*tavamarain tallavai ceital putanmaraintu*

*vēṭṭuvan putcimilt tarru.* (274)

(‘Tis as a fowler, silly birds to snare, in thicket lurks,
When, clad in stern ascetic garb, one secret evil works.’ [Pope])

(Behold the man who taketh cover under a saintly garb and doth evil:
he is like a fowler hiding in the bush. [Aiyar])

(In sages’ cloak, who evil works,
In a bush to snare, as a hunter lurks. [Sreenivasan])

(The sinner masked as saint is like one hid / in a bush snaring the birds.
[Iyengar])

(A sinning ascetic uses his cloak / As a bird-hunter a bush. [Sundaram])

Except Pope, all the select translators translate the couplet retaining the figure of speech, simile, in their translations. Pope translates the comparison but not in the form of simile in his English rendering.

In the 277th couplet, the hypocrisy of a man is compared to the dried seeds of a herbal creeper called *kunrimani* ‘Abrus Pecatorus’ which is red in colour with a black tip, where red dominates. Here, in this couplet, the men who are in the disguise of great men are compared to the bright red coloured part of the *kugri* seed which has more visibility and his darker mindis compared to the black part of the *kugri* seed which can be seen on keen observation only.
puṟaṅkunri kaṇḍanatyā rēnu makaṅkunri
mūkkir kariā ruṭaittu. (277)

(Outward, they shine as ‘kunri’ berry’s scarlet bright;
Inward, like tip if ‘kunri’ bead, as black as night. [Pope])

(The kunri seed is fair on one side, but the other side of it is black:
there are men who are like unto it: they are fair on the outside,
but their inside is all foul. [Aiyar])

(Like ‘kunri’ berry shine, who pose,
Outward bright, but black the nose. [Sreenivasan])

(Like the red-hued but black-nosed kunri seed,
some are fair but flawed within. [Iyengar])

(Like the konri red to view but black on top
Are many, ochre-robed but black within. [Sundaram])

All the select translators translate the simile into the TL English without changing the figure of speech.

In the 306th couplet the abstract noun ciyam ‘anger’ is compared to cērntāraik kolli ‘that which kills those who draw near.’ And another simile is also used in the same couplet by the author as iṅameṅgu mēmap punai where “one’s own kinsmen” are compared to the “secure boat.”

ciṅameṅguṅ cērntāraik kolli yīṅameṅgu
mēmap punaiyaic cuṭum. (306)

(Wrath, the fire that slayeth whose draweth near,
Will burn the helpful ‘raft’ of kindred near. [Pope])

(Choler destroyeth every man whom it approacheth: and it burneth also the
family of him who nurseth it. [Aiyar])

(Unbounded wrath kills everything within,
And will destroy the secure raft of kith and kin. [Sreenivasan])

(Anger like fire destroys all who draw near,
and their families as well. [Iyengar])

(Wrath is a fire which kills near and far
Burning both kinsmen and life’s boat. [Sundaram])

Pope translates the first simile *cigameñũñ cērtāraik kolli* into English in the form of metaphor as “wrath, the fire that slayeth whose draweth near” and the second simile *iŋameṇγu mēmap puṇai* as “helpful raft of kindred near” retaining the same figure of speech. Aiyar translates the figures of speech into sense. Sreenivasan too translates the simile of comparing wrath to the one which kills everyone who draws near into sense, but translates the other simile of comparing one’s kith and kin to a secure raft. Sundaram translates the first simile in the form of simile in the TL and translates the second simile into sense.

The 41st chapter has figures of speech like metaphor and simile in it. The 434th couplet has a simile comparing the life of one who fails to safe-guard one’s life before-hand to the stack of straw that is destroyed before fire.

*varumuṇgar kāvāṭan vālkkai yerimuṇgar*

*vaittūru pōlak keṭum.* (435)

(His joy who guards not ‘gainst the coming evil day,
Like straw before the fire shall swift consume away. [Pope])

(Behold the man who provideth not before-hand against surprise:
he will be destroyed even like a stack of straw before a spark of fire. [Aiyar])
(Who fails to guard against an evil day,
Like straw before a fire will fade away. [Sreenivasan])

(One who guards not against surprise invites
destruction, like straw by fire. [Iyengar])

(A life that does not guard against faults
Is a heap of straw before fire. [Sundaram])

While translating this couplet, all the select translators except Sundaram use
maintain to translate the simile in the form of simile in the TLT. Sundaram translates
the comparison into the TL but alters the simile into metaphor.

The tenth couplet of the 49th chapter is also with a figure of speech viz. simile
which brings home the message of choosing apt time to undertake an assignment
with the help of comparing the nature of a stork which waits patiently till it finds its
prey and acts swiftly to get it.

kokkokka kūmpum paruvattu marrathan

kuttokka cīrta viṭatu. (490)

(As heron stands with folded wing, so wait in waiting hour;
As heron snaps its prey, when fortune smiles, put forth your power. [Pope])

(When the time is against thee feign inaction like the stork: but when the tide
is on, strike with the swiftness of its souse. [Aiyar])

(Like heron, fold your wings and wait;
When time is ripe, like heron smite. [Sreenivasan])

(When time’s out of joint, stork-like inaction;
When the tide turns, a quick swoop! [Iyengar])
(Bide your time like the stork, and like it
When time serves, stick your prey. [Sundaram])

All the select translators translate the comparison by using the specific word
“as” or “like” used for the simile in their translations. Though their usage of words
and structure of sentences differ from one another, they translate the couplet without
transforming the figure of speech into the TL but in their own creative manner.

6.4. Personification in Comparison

Tiruvalluvar exaggerates many abstract nouns to the level of personal nouns.
The names of certain qualities are spoken of as having life and intelligence like the
living beings in some couplets of the *Tirukkural*. Though they are used in the
similes, they express the notion of personification with them. Another simile
\( \text{alukkārenā voru pāvi} \) which means “envy like a sinner” is used in the 168\(^\text{th}\) couplet.

\[ \text{alukkā reṇa voru pāvi tiruccerrut} \]

\[ \text{ṭīyili yuyttu viṭum. (168)} \]

(Envy, embodied ill, incomparable bane,
Good fortune slays, and soul consigns to fiery pain. [Pope])

(Caitiff envy bringeth on indigence and leadeth up to the gates of hell.
[Aiyar])

(Good luck, envy, the sin, will quell,
Will throw the soul into fires of hell. [Sreenivasan])

(The evil of envy destroys one’s wealth
and dooms the soul to hell-fire. [Iyengar])

(A unique parricide is Envy who ruins
His father’s wealth, and leads him to hell. [Sundaram])
The whole simile is not at all translated by the select translators. They omit the comparison in their translations. Though they use the equivalent English word “envy” to the Tamil word \textit{alukkāru}, they delete the personal noun \textit{pāvi} which means a sinner and instead they use the words such as ill, indigence, the sin, evil and a unique parricide. Though all the select translators substitute impersonal nouns for personal nouns and transform the figure of speech personification in the translated versions, Sundaram exaggerates the quality “Envy” to a personal noun in his translation.

Translating the first couplet of the 58\textsuperscript{th} chapter creates problem to the translators as it has the simile \textit{kāṇṇọṭṭa meṇnuṅ kaliperuṅ kārikai} which personifies the quality of “considerateness” and compares it to a beautiful maiden or beauty in a more descriptive manner than a simile.

\textit{kāṇṇọṭṭa meṇnuṅ kaliperuṅ kārikai}

\textit{yunmaiyā Ṽuṇṭiv vulaku. (571)}

(Since true benignity, that grace exceeding great, resides
In kingly souls, the world in happy state abides. [Pope])

(Behold that ravishing Beauty called Considerateness:
If the world runneth on smoothly it is all owing to her. [Aiyar])

(Since here the beauty of graciousness resides,
The world in happiness abides. [Sreenivasan])

(The saving grace of considerateness
smoothly keeps affairs thriving. [Iyengar])

(It is compassion, the most gracious of virtues,
Which makes the world go. [Sundaram])
There is no possibility of enjoying the beauty of the simile in the translations except that of Aiyar’s. He translates the simile as “ravishing Beauty called Considerateness” and tries to bring out the beauty of the simile from the SLT into the TLT. There is every possibility of ignoring or missing a word or phrase and deviating from the SLT while translating the simile in a couplet from its SL into the TL. Pope translates the simile into sense, while others transform it into some metaphors combined with sense such as “the beauty of graciousness,” “the saving grace of considerateness” and “the most gracious of virtues” but retain the sense of the simile and the couplet. While the select translators translate the couplet from its SL into the TL, none among them translates the simile into simile.

6.5. Parables in Comparison

“A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson,” says the *Oxford dict. of Difficult Words* (352). As parables are direct or indirect comparisons, they frequently use metaphorical language which allows the readers or listeners to discuss difficult or complex ideaseasily.

Tiruvalluvar too uses such stories in some of his couplets of the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* to teach certain doctrines and values of life to the people of the world. The 475th couplet itself is a parable through which the author insists on the importance of knowing the strength of others and the strength of one’s own self and the need to keep away from enmity with many others. The couplet says that the axle of the carriage will break even if it is over loaded with the soft feathers of peacock. The intended meaning of the couplet is that one is not supposed to take anything for the reason that it is of light nature.
piliṣey cākāṭu maccīrūmap paṇṭañ

cāla mikuttup peyiṇ. (475)

(With peacock feathers light you load the wain;
Yet, heaped too high, the axle snaps in twain. [Pope])
(Put too many of them and even peacock’s feathers would break the
waggon’s axle. [Aiyar])
(Even peacock feathers, if piled high,
Will break the carriage axle, by and by. [Sreenivasan])
(Don’t overstrain: even peacock’s feathers
in bulk can break the axle. [Iyengar])
(A peacock’s feather can break the axle-tree
Of an over-loaded cart. [Sundaram])

Pope translates the couplet which is a parable into the TL without altering the parable, yet he adds the second person “you” in his translation. The translations of the select translators except Sundaram bring out the story of the result of the over-loaded cart but with the feathers of the peacock which is soft and weightless by nature yet powerful enough to break the axle of the cart. Sundaram’s translation “a peacock’s feather can break the axle-tree of an over-loaded cart” renders not the parable but a statement (52). From this, it can even be considered that the cart is over-loaded but need not be with the feathers of a peacock.

In another couplet under the chapter itaṇarital ‘knowing the right place,’ Tiruvalḷuvar uses two parables to insist on the importance of knowing and selecting a proper place to fight with one’s enemies. In the fifth couplet of this chapter, a parable
of the crocodile that is all powerful in water and succeeds in its habitat but defeated if it leaves its place.

netumpugalul veli mutalai yaṭumpugalini

nīki ṇataṇaip pira. (495)

(The crocodile prevails in its own flow of water wide,
If this it leaves, ‘tis slain by anything beside. [Pope])

(All-powerful is the crocodile in deep water: but out of it, it is the playing of its foes. [Aiyar])

(In deep water, the crocodile prevails;
If this it leaves, against any beast it fails. [Sreenivasan])

(The crocodile, invincible in deep water, is helpless outside. [Iyengar])

(The crocodile wins in deep waters_

Coming out others win against it. [Sundaram])

The parable is translated into English by all the select translators in different ways. Yet, all the translations by the select translators bring out the significance of the parable in their translated versions.

The tenth couplet of this chapter too is a parable by itself where the fearless elephant, which kills the armed men, is defeated by the jackal when its legs are caught in marshy land.

kālāḷ kalari ṇariyaṭuṅ kaṇṇaṅcā

vēlāṇ mukatta kalirru. (500)

(The jackal slays, in miry paths of foot-betraying fan,
The elephant of fearless eye and tusks transfixing armed men. [Pope])
(Behold the high-mettled elephant that hath faced without wincing a whole multitude of lancers: even a jackal will triumph over him if he is entangled in marshy ground. [Aiyar])

(A fox can kill a fearless elephant, found
In foot-sinking marshy ground. [Sreenivasan])

(Though dauntless in war, the elephant caught
in slush, is prey to a fox. [Iyengar])

(A tusker which defies spearmen / Is killed in a bog by jackals. [Sundaram])

Though the select translators translate the parable in their own ways by adding words like “behold” or deleting words like vēḷāṇ mukatta ‘that faced lancers,’ all of them translated the parable into parable.

Besides these comparisons, Tiruvaḷḷuvar compares kūḷ ‘porridge’ to amīḷtu ‘heavenly food,’ kulāḷ ‘flute’ and yāḷ ‘a stringed lute’ to the babbling of children, the nature of guests and woman to the tender nature of the aniccam flower, the eyes of a maiden to kuvalai ‘a blue-coloured water lily flower’ and spear, love and passion to the ocean, the sharing nature of the crow to the men of like nature, the beauty of woman to the beauty of flower, peacock, moon and goddesses, catching the slipped-off vesture to the helping hand of the friend and so on which are left out in this study as it constrains space and time.

While discussing the literary style of the Tirukkural, Pillai in his book, Critical Studies in Kural, states that the couplets of the Tirukkural are with “telling phrases, apt similes and comparisons, striking personifications, gentle hyperboles and innuendoes, sparkle in every page and at every turn” (95). And translating the metaphors, similes and comparisons without changing their form and content is the
actual problem a translator faces while translating the *Tirukkural*. Yet, the select translators render the English translations of all the couplets of the *Tirukkural* by translating the same figures of speech into the TL whenever possible, or transform a figure of speech into another one or into sense.

The next chapter is the summation of the complete thesis along with the findings of this study, the limitations of this research, the problems faced by the translators in translating the cultural and the linguistic aspects of the *Tirukkural*, the ways and means they follow to overcome the problems, the areas of the text left out due to lack of time and space limit, and the cultural and linguistic aspects and features wide open for further research and the methodology followed in this thesis.