7.0. Introduction

A translator’s duty is to render the SL text into another TL in order to make it known to those who are really interested in reading or learning a literary work of another language and another culture. The translations of the select translators Pope, Aiyar, Sreenivasan, Iyengar and Sundaram prove that any reader who happens to read the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* in English, can enjoy the beauty, experience the lifestyle and learn the moral and ethical codes taught in the couplets by Tiruvallīvar to a certain extent. In order to bring out the English rendering as effective as that of the original text, a translator has to create the translation in the manner of the author of the SLT even if one cannot acquire the same inspiration.

7.1. Double Task of the Translator

A translator has to do a double task of translating the text from its SL into the TL without leaving the style as well as the content of the SLT which is a hard task to any translator. He has to discharge a double duty in translating a work of art, by transferring the SLT into the TLT and reorganizing the SLT to make acquainted with the TL, by adding or deleting or substituting a word or phrase or even a clause, since a translator cannot get the inspiration of the author or to think alike the author of the SLT always. This is because, if a translator gives priority to the rhythm and style, the subject matter will automatically get deviated from the SLT by addition and deletion; and if a translator gives priority to its meaning, the beauty of the language cannot be retained. As translation involves two languages, the Source Language and the Target Language, it is quite complicated to translate a literary work of a particular language which belongs to a particular region, race, culture and time into another language where every aspect differs from that of the
Source Language. Translation itself is translating cultures and not translating languages alone.

Cultural factors and linguistic factors go hand in hand when one deals with the principles of literary translation. Translating a poetic work of art belonging to Tamil, a language with rich cultural heritage into a modern language like English is not easy for any translator, and so, a translator ought to face many difficulties in transferring the cultural and linguistic elements from the Source Language Text into the Target Language Text. The cultural and linguistic aspects of a language differ from those of others, since each language is unique by nature. Yet, the select translators, do deserve our praise since they translate, trans-create and re-create the well-known literary work of art *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, for the sake of the foreign readers who do not know the SL Tamil to enjoy the beauty and worth of a literary work of art in the target language.

Translation itself is trans-creation to scholars like Tiwari. She states that “the translation, nay, trans-creation creates ontological strength and the literary fragrance of original text without making any changes in the situation of ideas or information units” (52). Bringing out the original text into another language is the need in translation. “Transcreation uses a simple, clear, and non-pedantic style and language that is accessible to all levels of readers- yet captures the original themes and concepts in all their complexity” (54). No two translations are the same; and no two languages are the same; and it is not easy to transfer a literary work from one language into another because each language is unique by nature.

Besides these difficulties in translating, the translators managed to follow various methods of transforming the SLT into the TL by using the equivalents of
the words/nouns whenever available, substituting the TL words or phrase or clause describing the noun or word of the SL, in the nonexistence of equivalents and bring out the text in the TL and prove Lefevre’s (1992) opinion that the “translators are the artisans of compromise” (6). And they never fail to render the SLT in the TL with its content and meaning. They even add or delete few words from one or the other couplet with the thought that it may not be essential to bring out the SLT into the TLT and make their translations trans-creations.

7.2. Major Findings

This trans-cultural and cross-linguistic study of the select English translations of the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* has clearly brought to light the problems in translating the basic elements of culture such as the culture-specific items relating to the way of life and the cultural elements of flora and fauna and the linguistic features like nominal words and the figures of speech used in comparisons which remain a hard nut to crack for any translator, however great she or he is, however strong her or his proficiency in the SL and the TL is and however deep her or his scholarship of the SL and the TL is. This study of the translations of the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* in English is confined to five translations - by Pope, Aiyar, Sreenivasan, Iyengar and Sundaram. Though there are too many translated versions of the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* in English, the urge to translate it still subsists, since no translation is yet able to bring out the SLT to the entire satisfaction of the readers and the researchers, or is accepted as the exact English version of it. Though scholars and translators like Pope and Karl Graul are of the view that it is impossible to translate the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* into a European language like English, Pope and the other select translators succeed
in rendering the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* into English following one or other theory or procedure of translating the couplets along with the cultural terms and culture bound words.

Besides finding equivalents in the TL for the cultural words, terms, culture-bound-words, traditional customs and beliefs mentioned in the couplets of the SLT, the translators have succeeded in using substitutes whenever an equivalent word is not found in the TL; and they transliterate the culture-bound words into the TL by adding explanatory notes or descriptive notes so that the foreign readers can understand the cultural terms and customs prevailed in the time of the SL text. And from this study, one may come to a conclusion that the only way of translating a cultural element which has no equivalent term in the TL is transliterating the particular item in the TL and render it along with the explanatory notes.

As culture is the blend of refined factors such as civilization, tradition, customs, social structure, social norms, social institutions, languages, land, climate, flora, fauna, region, religion, games, music, entertainment, belief, ideas, attitude, cuisine, clothes, folklore, style, values and recreation which differ from language to language, race to race, place to place and time to time, translating or dealing with the cultural problems in translating a literary work like the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* of a particular language Tamil into another language English is a challenging task. So, the select cultural elements were divided into two divisions based on the way of life and the words relating to the cultural elements flora and fauna and the products related to them, in order to make the study easier for the researcher as well as the readers. The select translators followed various methods of translating the culture-bound words by using equivalent words and terms which ever available or substituting the words closer in meaning and content to the cultural words and
terms or by transliterating the culture-bound word with descriptive or explanatory notes and render their translated versions.

The SLT is rich in linguistic factors such as word play, figures of speech, rhyme and rhythm which cannot be dealt with as a whole in any study. So, some nominal words and some comparisons are selected for this study. While translating the select nominal items used in the SLT, finding equivalents in the form of single-word is not possible for all the nominal words in the TL like that of the SL. The problems of the translators in finding equivalents and adding or deleting some words or substituting some phrases or clauses for such nominal items in the TLT in order to make their English rendering closer to the SLT and to justify their translations are also dealt with.

Regarding the linguistic features like the nominal words and figures of speech, the select translators prefer their own ways and means of translating the nominal words by translating them by using equivalent nouns whenever available, and in case of its non-availability, substituting a word closer in meaning to the SL word or substituting a phrase for a nominal word or by transliterating the SL word with and without footnotes or explanatory notes. While translating the comparisons, the select translators translate the figures of speech like metaphor, simile, personification and parable into the TL by changing the figures of speech metaphor into simile and the vice versa or translate them into sense and bring out the content of the SLT into their translated versions. They fulfill their duty as a translator by conveying the content of the SL text with its cultural heritage and linguistic bondage to the members of the TL culture even if it is unknown to them.
However, in spite of all these inherent difficulties that a translator invariably encounters in the practice of translation, the select translators have done commendable work in their own ways in espousing their own perception of translational practices. The linguistic study done on the small area of nominal words and comparisons proves that the select translators are the real artisans who provide the equivalents of the words/nouns whenever available or substitute the TL words or phrase or clause describe the noun or the word of the SL in case of the nonexistence of equivalents, transfer or alter a figure of speech into another or into sense, yet without changing the comparison, add or delete few words from one or the other couplet if they feel dispensable to bring out the SLT into the TLT and make their translations trans-creations and succeed in rendering their translated versions.

If the translated versions undergo back-translation, it will not be possible to find any justice to the original text and we may get an entirely different text. A translation is expected to give what the original text means. A translator is expected to speak in his own language but with the voice of the author. But it is not easy to speak in a surrogate voice. No translation can be accepted that it is in the voice of the author. Also, no translator translates a literary work of art for those who know the Source Language. At the same time, no learner or a reader goes for its translated version, if he knows the SL unless and otherwise it is needed for a review or a research work. So, giving priority to the target audience is more important than giving priority to the grammar and diction of the original text. The translators study the earlier translations and comment on them and explain why they come forward to translate the work once again. Each translation is a creation
by itself and tends to initiate the teachings of Tiruヴァゥvar which expound a universal morality which is common to all.

7.2. General Limitations

In the trans-cultural study, only the cultural words and terms relating to the way of life and relating to the flora and fauna were taken for this study. But not all the cultural words and culture-bound terms and customs are selected for this study due to lack of time and space. The culture of addressing God using various names, names of gods and goddesses of good and bad omens like Intira (god of gods) and Yama (god of death), addressing the kings by using different names, comparisons of the organs of human beings to weapons, the traditional beliefs of seven births and two different worlds found in the couplets of the Tirukkuヴァル are not taken for study since the SLT is rich in its usage of cultural elements and it will not be easy for any researcher to make a vast study on the text within the limit of a dissertation, which is a scripture by itself.

In the cross-linguistic study of the translations of the Tirukkuヴァル, a list of select nominal words like, the words that express reasons, the compound nouns and abstract nouns (names of qualities) were selected for linguistic study. But, there are more nominal words of the same kind and still more nominal words that give the names of weapons, equipment and utensils which were not included in this study. Also, there are many verbs which cause problems to the translators like kulaital and aḻavutal which are quite impossible to be translated into a western language like English due to lack of equivalent words or substitutes. Besides these, words which belong to the other parts of speech like pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections were not included in this study.
Among the figures of speech from the couplets of the *Tirukkural*, a select list of comparisons are taken up for study among which there are metaphors, similes, personifications and parables. But, not all the figures of speech which are used to bring out the comparisons in the couplets of the *Tirukkural* are taken up for study. Also, the figure of speech antithesis is found immensely in many of the couplets of the *Tirukkural* which itself can cover a complete dissertation is not taken up for this study. Other figures of speech like hyperbole, epigram and pun are also not taken up for this study. The stylistic features like the metric form of the couplets, their rhythm and rhyme scheme are also not taken up for analyses in this study due lack of space and time and due to the multifaceted qualities of the couplets which need multitasks of the translators and researchers to deal with to bring out their hidden potentials.

7.3. Areas for Further Study

Among the cultural factors, not all the aspects are taken up for study in this research. Many cultural factors in the area of social institution, virtues of all parts of life, tradition of kingdoms and ministry and the two kinds of love such as furtive love and wedded love existed in the time of the *Tirukkural* are there for the researchers for further study. The couplets of the *Tirukkural* are rich in rhythm and rhyme. “Rhyme” is called *etukai* in the SL Tamil, which has seven divisions in Tamil grammar. Pope points out that the “rhyme in Tamil is in the beginning of the line, and is strictly the identity of the second letter, the first being of the same metrical quantity” (Introduction xxvi). Majority of the couplets of the *Tirukkural* are themselves rhymed, and this area is open for further research.
The metre of the couplets and the beauty of rhyme is an interesting area open for further research. Also, while translating poetry, the sentence structure, mode and poetic diction play a major role. Shanmugam, in his article, “Syntactical Styles of Valluvar,” states that “there are more than one sentence in a poem, the study of the relation between clauses and sentences within a poem from the point of view of structure (cohesion) and semantics (coherence) could also be undertaken” (Shanmugam 1). Hence, this field is also open for further research. The problems in translating the verbs which are special to the Tamil language alone are also wide open for further study. Also, the Tirukkural is enriched with various figures of speech and only few among them are taken for study in this research. Other figures of speech such as antithesis and alliteration used in the couplets of the Tirukkural are problematic enough to the translators in translating them by retaining these figures of speech or maintaining the form and content and structure of the SLT into the TLT. These two figures of speech cover the majority of the couplets and a study of them is yet to be dealt with for further research.

7.4. Conclusion

As every language is unique by nature and every literary work of art has its own cultural and linguistic specialties, the select translators might have faced many difficulties in rendering the renowned Tamil work of art Tirukkural in English. Any translation cannot become the original, though it provides the interpretation or the meaning and the content of the SLT. If the translated versions undergo back-translation, it is quite impossible to find any justice to the original text as it results in an entirely different text. A translation is expected to offer what the original text means. A translator ought to speak in his own language but with the voice of the
author. Yet, no translation can be accepted that it is in the voice of the author, since the translator translates, transcreates and recreates the SLT into the TLT. But, no learner or a reader goes for its translated versions, if he knows the SL unless and otherwise it is needed for a review or a research work. So, giving priority to the target audience is more important than the SLT; and giving more importance to the content of the SLT is more important than giving priority to the grammar, style and diction of the SLT.

All the select translations taken up for study, though to a large extent fulfill the basic expectations of a translation, are undoubtedly a clear pointer to the simple dictum in translation theory that no translation can ever be perfect, appropriate and ideal.