

Issues in Translating Epistrophe from Tamil into English with Particular Reference to Tamil Classical *Purananuru* Poem – 182

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Introduction

Translation of any literature is a fruitful activity as it forms the way for international influences. Possibly new genres found in other literatures are introduced to the indigenous one by translation. In one way or the other the process of translation broadens the ranges of meaning and expressions of the native language. It offers new ideas and promotes understanding among people of different culture and literature. In the Indian context, its need has become all the more important as we have got millennia old literatures. These works would be restricted to the narrow linguistic areas if they are not translated into other languages particularly English.

When literary works are translated, a critical analysis in the light of standard theories and principles is highly essential so as to improve upon the existing works of translation and further to carry out the work in a well structured form.

Epistrophe means a repetition of the word or words at the ends of successive clauses. Rendering the Source language text's epistrophe into the Target language text is a difficult task for a translator because the epistrophe of the SL may not go in line with the syntax of the TL. Hence the translator can only translate as per the syntactic requirement of the Target language text.

As part of the analysis here the present paper includes the three different English translations of A.K. Ramanujan, the renowned English poet and tri-lingual translator, P.N. Appuswami, a lawyer, educationist and an author and M.L. Thangappa, a Tamil poet, teacher and translator. It is a comparative analysis. There are two levels of comparisons. At the first level, the SL poem is compared with the TL poems and at the second level the TL poems are compared among one another.

Keywords: Epistrophe, Source language text, Target language text, rendering, lexis, syntax, particles of negation, etc.

The Tamil Poem and English Translations

புறநானூறு பாடல் - 182

உண்டால் அம்ம, இவ் உலகம் – இந்திரர்
அமிழ்தம் இயைவதாயினும், இனிது எனத்
தமியர் உண்டலும் இலரே; முனிவு இலர்;
துஞ்சலும் இலர்; பிறர் அஞ்சுவது அஞ்சி,
புகழ் எனின், உயிரும் கொடுக்குவர், பழி எனின்,
உலகுடன் பெறினும், கொள்ளலர்; அயர்விலர்;
அன்ன மாட்சி அனையர் ஆகி,
தமக்க என முயலா நோன் தாள்,
பிறர்க்கு என முயலுநர் உண்மையானே.

திணை: பொதுவியல்

துறை: பொருண்மொழிக் காஞ்சி

- கடலுள் மாய்ந்த இளம்பெருவழுதி.

TABLE: 01.

AKR

PNA

MLT

**This World Lives
Because**

**WHY THE EARTH
STAYS SECURE**

The world keeps going

This world lives
because
some men
do not eat alone,
not even when they get
the sweet ambrosia of the gods;

they've no anger in them,
they fear evils other men fear
but never sleep over them;

give their lives for honor,
will not touch a gift of whole worlds
if tainted;

there's no faintness in their hearts
and they do not strive
for themselves.

No wonder the earth stays secure
For it has noble men
Who never feast by themselves
Even if the fare should be
Divine ambrosia:
Men without anger, or hate,
Or idle sloth,
Or the fears and apprehensions
Of common humanity;
Men who would for glory's sake
Give up their very life;
Men who would scorn
The gift of the entire world
Should the least dishonor taint the gift.
Since such men of spirit and daring,
With no thought for themselves,
Live and work for others,
The earth stays secure.

The world keeps going
because there live in it
men who will not eat alone
even ambrosia from the gods;
men who do not remain torpid
fearing things that others fear.
They'd lay down their lives
in deeds of fame,
but will not do any wrong
even if the whole world
is laid at their feet.
And they are tireless.
Having all these fine qualities,
they strive hard,
not for their own good
but for the good of others.

**-Ilamperuvaluthi,
the Pandyan king
Purananuru 182**

Because such men are,
this world is.

Ilam Peruvaluti
Purananuru-182

Purananuru-182:
ILAMPERUVALUTI
WHO DIED IN THE SEA

Structure and Theme

The poem consists of nine lines. Its *tinai* is பொதுவியல் *potuviyal* ‘general theme’. As the poem delineates high ideals which are for the entire humanity, the poem is categorized under பொருண்மொழிக் காஞ்சி *porunmolik kāñci*. It has been written by Pandian King, Izhamperuvazhuthi. This is the only poem written by the king. There was maritime trade during his reign. During the *cankam* age the Tamil kings owned ships and traded with many other countries. As the king drowned in the ocean and died, he was called *Kadalu! Māinta Ilamperuvaluti*. The summary of the *puram* poem is:

This world exists because there are among the people some good-natured men who do not eat alone, even if they get the sweet ambrosia from the heavenly Indirans. In the Tamil *cankam* context ‘ambrosia’ means ‘a kind of holy nectar’. According to the Hindu mythology, the ambrosia is said to confer immortality to mortals. Some great men living in this world have no hatred. They fear the evils to be feared. They are not lazy. This kind of men would give even their lives for honour but would not accept a gift of whole worlds if it comes with a blame. They strive hard not for their own good but for the good of others. It is because such men live in the world, it continues to be active. The ‘world’ here stands for ‘the people’ of the world.

The Tamil poem is known for its sound system. It has been highlighted in the following discussion. Here, there is an instance of words repeated at the end of some sentences in the poem. The Tamil poet has repeatedly used the SL negative particle இலர் *ilar* in the poem. It means ‘they are not’. In English this stylistic device is called an Epistrophe. The following section describes the epistrophe and attempts to study how the translators have responded to the SL words in their renderings.

Translation of the SL Epistrophe

Epistrophe means a repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses. An example of epistrophe in the Target language can be quoted from one of Shakespeare’s plays. It reads as:

Shylock: “I’ll have **my lord!** Speak not against **my lord.**
I have sworn an oath that I will have **my lord!**”
- *Merchant of Venice.*

The epistrophe here sets up a pronounced rhythm. It secures a special emphasis, both by repeating the word and by putting the word in the final position of the sentence.

Thus, the *purananuru* poems abound in such stylistic devices. As for the rendering of the figure of speech is concerned, it is a difficult task for a translator because the epistrophe of the Source language text may not go in line with the syntax of the Target language text. In such a situation it poses some difficulty for the translator in imitating or representing the rhyme and harmony between lines. Hence in the event of non-agreement of such words of emphasis between the SL and the TL, the translator can only try some other means of representing the same, by way of employing shifts, spatial arrangements, substituting it with some other qualifying terms or expressions.

In the poem the lexical item ‘இலர்’ *ilar* is clearly an instance of epistrophe. The SL expressions; உண்டலும் இலர் *untalum ilar*, முனிவு இலர் *munivu ilar*, துஞ்சலும் இலர் *tuñcalum ilar*, கொள்ளலர் *koḷ lalar*, அயர்விலர் *ayervilar* have the same ‘இலர்’ *ilar* ending. The word ‘இலர்’ *ilar* is a word of negation in the SL poem. As the Tamil poem talks about the special quality of some good-natured people living in this world, their personal qualities and characters are appraised in the poem with the use of the epistrophe. According to Tamil syntax it can naturally occur at the end of a sentence. As the SL epistrophe ‘இலர்’ *ilar* is negative, it has been replaced with the different negative markers available in English in the translations of A. K. Ramanujan, P.N. Appuswami and M. L. Thangappa. They are illustrated in the following table below. The English syntax requires the negative particle to go along with the anomalous finite and accordingly the process of negation is located in mid-sentence unlike in Tamil. Hence this loss is inevitable in translation. The following table indicates how the negative markers are found in mid-sentence position, not the end-position.

TABLE: 02.
Instances of Epistrophe in Tamil and their Equivalents in English

S. No.	SLT	AKR	PNA	MLT
1.	உண்டலும் இலர்	some men do not eat alone	noble men who never feast by themselves	men who will not eat alone
2.	முனிவு இலர்	they’ve no anger	men without anger , or hate,	men who do not hate
3.	துஞ்சலும் இலர்	they never sleep over them;	men without idle sloth	men who do not remain torpid

4.	பழி உலகுடன் பெறினும், கொள்ளலர்;	எனின், they will not touch a gift of whole worlds if tainted;	men who would scorn The gift of the entire world Should the least dishonour taint the gift.	They will not do any wrong even if the whole world is laid at their feet.
5.	அயர்விவர்;	there's no faintness in their hearts	?	they are tire less

Summary

There is a vast difference between the syntax of Tamil and English language. Consequently, it is very difficult to equate the SL epistrophe with that of the TL especially in the same manner. The particles of negation have been repeatedly used in the SL poem for the purpose of emphasis. In the Tamil poem the negative particle, 'இலர்' *ilar* comes at the end of the sentence. There are five such particles in the poem building up the tone and tenor of the verse. They also contribute to the rhyme scheme of the Tamil poem. When translated into English the possibility of repeating the words of emphasis is ruled out. Unlike the SL negative particles, 'இலர்' *ilar* which is placed at the end of the sentences, the TL words of negation such as **not, no, never, without** etc. come in the middle. Hence the stylistic device of epistrophe of the original is missing in the translation.

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