Language Use In Akam Poems With Reference To Kurincittinai

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1. Sangam Literature: An introduction

The body of Tamil literature written before the 3rd Century AD is called Sangam literature (Subramanian, 1981). They are Eiṭṭuttokai - the eight anthologies, Pattuppāṭṭu - the ten songs, and Patigēṭṭikkanaṭṭu - the eighteen works. A work on grammar and poetic techniques, known as Tolkāppiyam and which is later than the Sangam poems, is the earliest work available in Tamil, other than the few verses available from Akattiyam, Avinayam etc. The Tolkāppiam continues an older and well established tradition which relates to the rules governing poetry, figures of speech etc.

1.1 The akam puram Concepts

The eight anthologies consist of poems divided into two broad categories called akam ‘interior’ and puram ‘exterior’. This classification made by Tolkāppiyar has been accepted as the standard division of poetics, by scholars down the ages. Ilampūraṭṭar (Circa AD 9) whose commentary on Tolkāppiyam is the earliest extant one, has defined the two terms. Akam, ‘the inner’, is so called since “its content is the enjoyment of sexual union, and its results realized only by the two persons concerned”. Puram, ‘the outer’, gets its name from the fact that “its content is indulgence in acts of war and acts of virtue and its results comprehensible to the others” (Kailasapathy 1968). Akam is generally treated as the poetry of love and Puram as the poetry of heroism. “Akam means whatever is subjective and by convention it means love between an ideal hero and an ideal heroine; this love to begin with, is premarital and clandestine. Later it persists in the married state but in a different form. During each stage love is subject to various pressures and its course does not run smooth.
Vatsayana's *Kamasutra*, but is suggestive, psychological, sophisticated and does not deal with biological sexual relations” (Quoted with modifications, Subrahmanian 1982).

It may be stated that generally whatever is not *Akam* is *Puram*. It deals with situations capable of objectification, such as government, war, charity, friendship, etc.

1.2 Bardic poetry

The love and the heroic poetry, viz. the *Akam* and *Puram* poetry, are denoted as bardic poetry, oral in nature (Kailasapathy 1968). This notion has been refuted by others (Hart III, 1975). The poets appear to have modelled their compositions on forms which they were familiar with. The only models they had were the oral poems composed by the performers all around them namely *Pânas* - the bards. The poets took most of the poetic themes from the *Pânas* and composed their poems modelled on the bardic oral songs. In others words the poets adopted the conventions and subject matter from the oral bards.

1.3 Characteristics of Akam poems

The important characteristic of an *Akam* poem is that the characters are not identified by proper names.

Symbolic suggestions by means of *ulâqiya* (implicit simile) etc., is another characteristic of an *Akam* poem. The unexpressed interplay of connotations between different parts of the poem is left to ponder over while analyzing and appreciating the poem. This characteristic feature of Tamil *Akam* poems is very different from Sanskrit or English love poems (Hart III, 1975:182-191). *Akam* poems are lyrical in nature. The marker- *ê* at the end of the last line of the poem serves the purpose of the punctuation mark viz. ‘full stop’, to denote the end of the poem.

1.4 Grammar of Akam Poems

The nature of *Akam* poetry is defined by Tolkâppiyar as here under. It is a combination of *nâta ka vaâlakku* and *ulakiyal vaâlakku* (Tol. Poru. *Iâmpûranâr*, 56) i.e., it consists of certain imaginary features created by the poet as well as certain real features selected from the worldly behavior or code of conduct.

Every *akam* poem is in the form of a *kâru* i.e., utterance made by a character in a particular situation governed by *Akam* conventions.

The characters who make utterances in *akam* poems mostly are 1) Heroine - *Talaivi*, 2) Friend - *Tôli* and 3) Hero - *Talaivañ*.
1.5 Akam poetic conventions

The conventions of Akam poems centre around the concepts of mutal, karu and uri.

**Mutal** refers to landscape, time and season.

**Karu** refers to flora, fauna, etc., commonly available in a particular landscape.

**Uri** refers to the phases of love in different landscapes, that is, a particular phase of love is associated with a particular landscape.

For example in the mountainous region known as *kurinya* the time and season meant for the performance of the poetic characters are ‘night’ and ‘cold’ or ‘early frost season’ respectively. These are known as *mutal porul*.

The birds peacock, parrot, the beasts monkey, elephant, horse, bull, lion, bear, tiger, etc., the trees or plants such as *kongai, jack, veikai, bamboo*, etc., the occupations and people like hill tribes guarding millet, harvesting, collecting honey, roots etc., and water sources such as water-falls, etc., generally found in the landscape of *kurinya*, are known as *karupporul*.

Further the *Tolkâappiyam* makes a distinction between (i) the open, direct explicit manner (of an utterance) known as *velippattakkilattal*, and (ii) the indirect implicit manner of the communication, known as *uljugai* meaning suggestion or implicit simile.

The phases of love, for example, the clandestine premarital love known as *kalavu* (with an implicit advice to *karpu*) meant for *kurinya*, the mountainous region, is the *uripporul*.

There are five landscapes in total, each referring to a *tinai*, i.e., a phase of love. They are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>phase of love (i.e. <em>tinai</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><em>kurinya</em> - mountainous region</td>
<td>Premarital love (Dichotomy of premarital - <em>kalavu</em> versus marital - <em>karpu</em> life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><em>Mullai</em> - forest / pasture land</td>
<td>Patient waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><em>Neytal</em> - seashore land</td>
<td>Anxious waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><em>Pâlai</em> - desert land (i.e. Turning of <em>mullai</em> and <em>kurinya</em> to desert land)</td>
<td>Separation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For identifying an overall theme of an *Akam* poem, the order of preferences, as per convention, are as follows:

(i) *Mutal porul* i.e. landscape and time and season

(ii) If this fails, the next order of preference is *karupporul*, i.e., flora, fauna, etc. pertinent to that land,

(iii) if this also fails the last order of preference, is the particular phase of love i.e., *uripporul*.  

For each poem the commentator has formulated *turai* (i.e. path to recognize the back ground, the speaker- *kurui*, the listener - *Ketpor*, the specific theme - *viri*, and the way the message is conveyed from speaker to listener. In other words, a poem is appreciated, generally, with the aid of the compiler/ commentator who fixes the *tiñai* ‘the over all theme of the poem’, and *turai* ‘the other sub aspects of the poem’ and the bases for fixing these are the *Akam* conventions, found in the chapter on poetics, viz. *porulatikaram*, of the *Tolkāppiam*.

2. Linguistic stylistics Approach

A linguistic stylistics approach is followed in this paper to study the language use phenomenon as recognized in sociolinguistics. Further, concepts such as *pragmatics* (with reference to speech act theory), *context-free*, context-bound and the *signifier-signified* relationship are made use of.

2.1 Pragmatics

In a situation where papers are loosely kept on a table, the utterance viz. ‘The door is open’ stimulates the listener to close the door. The same utterance in another situation where the listener waits outside the house, makes the listener enter the house. The real or intended meaning of the utterance, viz. The ‘door is open’, is ‘Close the door’ in one situation and, ‘Come inside’ in another. The listener receives the meaning not by the way in which the sentence is formed but in terms of intention and acts accordingly. This aspect is found in all natural languages.

Likewise the meaning of a poem need not be brought out exactly by the way in which a sentence is formed. To put it differently, one can find layers of meaning: One meaning at the surface level and quite another at the inner level. The surface level meaning can be obtained at the *context-free level* and the inner level meaning at the *context-bound level*, especially considering the *Akam* conventions as context, for the real appreciation of the poems. Poem 2, *Akanânûru* lines 1 to 7 pertinent to *kurückittinai* - the mountainous landscape may be taken here for discussion. As back ground information, it may be pointed out that the hero (*talaivay̱*) meets the heroine (*talaivi̱*)
during the day, prolonging the tryst - the secret meeting between the lovers. The heroine’s friend ( tôlî) advises him to marry the heroine as she is kept under house arrest by parents. The meaning of the poetic lines at the context-free level is as follows: The male monkey that drank the sweet intoxicated water by mistake, found it difficult to climb the sandal wood tree with a pepper climber around, and sleeps on a flowery bed. This is part of the landscape description of the mountainous region where the hero resides.

At the second level, when Akam literary conventions (Tol. Porul. sutras 3 and 4), which act as context, are brought in, the inner meaning is revealed with the help of the implicit simile known as ulḷugai. The male monkey here refers to hero. The monkey’s drinking the sweet intoxicated water and the sleepy monkey on a flowery bed refers to the hero’s indulgence in premarital love, i.e. kālavu. The monkey’s inability to climb the sandal wood tree with a pepper climber around refers to the hero’s prolonging the tryst and not planning to marry her. The sandal wood tree (hero) with a pepper climber around (heroine) refers to the marital status i.e. kagpu stage. The interpretation of the inner meaning becomes possible with the help of the natural objects-Karupporul, such as intoxicated water, fauna, flora, etc. More over the verbs un‘eat’ and kanpatu ‘sleep’ in the poetry have sexual connotations, referring to the premarital kālavu life.

Hence, the lines give a landscape description at one level i.e. context-free level and become suggestions or what is known as ulḷugai, an ‘implicit simile’, at another level i.e. at the context-bound level.

Hence, the lines give a landscape description at one level i.e. context-free level and become suggestions or what is known as ulḷugai, an ‘implicit simile’, at another level i.e. at the context-bound level. The difference between a simile and an implicit simile is that in the case of a simile both the object in comparison and the object compared are stated explicitly and are linked with words such as pōla ‘like’ etc. For example, ‘the male monkey, like the hero’. In the case of an implicit simile, only the simile is presented leaving it to the imagination and interpretation of the readers to equate it with the object referred to or signified and obviously there is no link word such as ‘like’ etc.

In another sense the implicit simile has a signifier-signified relationship. In the poem the male monkey is the ‘signifier’ for the hero, who is the ‘signified’.

3. Poems under study

Some of the poems of kuriṅcitṭinai from the anthologies (i) Akanānûru, (ii) Nāṟṟīnai, (iii) Aṅkṟṟṟṟṟuru and (iv) Kuruntokai are taken for analysis and discussion.

3.1 The themes of kuriṅcitṭinai

The overall theme of kuriṅcitṭinai is premarital, clandestine love and there are poems reflecting the following ‘three’ sub-themes, namely: 1. Efforts
towards premarital love 2. Prolonging the tryst for premarital, clandestine love-\textit{kaḷavu} in opposition to \textit{kaṟpu} ‘marital life’ and 3. Hero’s proposal of marital life- \textit{kaṟpu}.

3.1.1 Efforts toward premarital love (i.e. \textit{kaḷavu}).

In this category the poems, generally centre on the theme of \textit{kaḷavu} alone and the other aspect \textit{kaṟpu} is not taken into account, probably because love is in the initial stages.

Poems 32 and 268 of \textit{Akanāṇūṟu} may be cited as good examples of this category.

3.1.2 Prolonging of the tryst - premarital love - \textit{kaḷavu}, in opposition to \textit{kaṟpu}

There are many poems which fall into this category. Though the poems speak about the prolonging of the tryst and the agony thereby experienced by the heroine, the composition of these poems are such that the element of \textit{kaṟpu}, i.e. advice to the hero, for marital life is built in, in a very subtle manner.

3.1.3 Hero’s proposal of marital life

The marital stage \textit{kaṟpu} element is in opposition with the premarital phase of love i.e. \textit{kaḷavu} element (Seetha, 1992). The following poems: \textit{Akanāṇūṟu} 42, \textit{Naṟṟinaī} 22, \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} 229 may be cited as good examples for this sub-theme (However as an exception \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} 230 speaks only about \textit{kaṟpu} and does not mention \textit{kaḷavu}).

Following is a diagrammatic representation of the theme and sub-themes:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Poems: \textit{kuriṅcittinai}}
  \item \textbf{Overall Theme: Premarital love (clandestine love)}
  \item \textbf{Sub themes}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item 1. Efforts toward premarital love - \textit{kaḷavu}
        \begin{itemize}
          \item \textit{Akanāṇūṟu} 32, 268 etc. Generally not in opposition with \textit{kaṟpu}
          \item Exception \textit{Akanāṇūṟu} 392
        \end{itemize}
      \item 2. Prolonging the tryst for premarital, clandestine love
        \begin{itemize}
          \item \textit{Kaḷavu} (binary opposition with \textit{Kaṟpu})
          \item Many poems
        \end{itemize}
      \item 3. Hero’s proposal of marital life - \textit{Kaṟpu} (binary opposition with \textit{kaḷavu})
        \begin{itemize}
          \item \textit{Akanāṇūṟu} 42 \textit{Naṟṟinaī} 22
          \item \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} 229
          \item *Exception \textit{Aiṅkuṟunūṟu} 230 (only \textit{kaṟpu})
        \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
3.2 The dichotomy of kalavu: karpu

The dichotomy of karpu as presented in different poems, in different ways from the view point of language use is the subject matter of this paper. The poems pertaining to kugictițițait taken for discussion are (1) Akanānûr 2, 8, 18 and 42 (2) Narînai 27, 36 and 53, (3) Ainkurunûr 214 and 216 and (4) kuruntokai 25 and 26. Of these, the longest poems are from the Akananûr and each poem has a length of 13 to 31 lines. The shortest poems are those from the Ainkurunûr and each poem is about 3 to 6 lines long. Narînai has poems from 9 to 12 lines in length and kuruntokai from 4 to 8 lines. It may be mentioned that the longer the poems the broader the scope for the landscape description, description of the perilous path etc., and, as a result, the scope for building in suggestions, making use of the karupporul flora, fauna, etc., in the form of ulurai ‘implicit simile’, are also broader.

3.2.1 The language use phenomena

The aspects of language use, as found in Akam poems, are hypothesized as follows: 1. The use of Karupporul of the landscape for suggestions. 2. The use of phrases in opposition. 3. The use of pragmatics. 4. Joining many karupporul in different combinations to form images. 5. The use of the grammatical word - the infinitive form for the dual meaning and 6. The entire discourse as addressed to the hero acting as an advice.

It may be mentioned that one or more than one aspect regarding the language use may be found in each of the poems.

3.2.1.1 Poems of category 1- The use of karupporul of the landscape for suggestions

The use of karupporul of the landscape for suggestions, ulurai etc., for setting up a binary opposition between kalavu the premarital life and karpu the marital life.

(1). Poem 8, Akananûr

The utterance is made by the heroine. The listener is the friend, but the utterance is meant for the hero who is hidden and is overhearing. It may be mentioned that the second listener viz. hero who is not visible is actually posited by the commentator Ilampūranar, as per literary convention. Hence the utterance is known as Ciraippurakkilavi.

The gist of the poem is as follows. The hero prolongs the tryst without marrying the heroine. The heroine wishes that she could cross the perilous path to meet the hero even on a rainy day with the help of lightning. She says
that she would have attempted to cross the perilous path if she had been lucky enough to have her man showing consideration and affection to her, seeing her plight. The perilous path is exemplified by means of the following images with an appendage stating that these are common in the mountainous region of the hero!

1. A snake in the ant hill gets disturbed because of the bear which stretches his hand with sharp nailed fingers, inside the ant hill, to collect the winged white ants.

2. A tiger drags the foul smelling body of a wild boar along the jack fruit orchard.

3. A female elephant attempts to save a male elephant which has fallen into a pit.

The first image of the landscape suggests that the heroine is disturbed because of the hero’s act of prolonging the tryst i.e. kaḻavu (Snake - heroine; bear - hero).

The second image suggests that because of the hero’s prolonging of the tryst, gossip (alar in Tamil) spreads, which form part of kaḻavu – the premarital phase. (Tiger - Hero; wild boar - heroine).

Foul smell ———> gossip

Dragging the body of the wild boar ———> continuing the tryst.

In the third image, the dichotomy of kaḻavu: karpu gets established. The heroine tries to save the hero from his continuous indulgence in kaḻavu. This has to be correlated with the heroine’s desire in meeting the hero, even if it involves crossing the perilous path, with an aim to bring sense into the hero and to compel him to marry her.

At the second level the first two images speak about the premarital phase and the third image brings out the dichotomy of premarital versus marital life. This is possible with the use of karupporuḷ which, at an inner level, leads to ulḷurai or implicit simile for establishing the kaḻavu: karpu dichotomy. This is one aspect of language use (No.3.2.1.1)

The entire discourse is meant for the hero as the anguish of the heroine is revealed in the last four lines of the poem, in the form of accusing the hero. The tone of accuse is such that though it appears to be addressed to the friend, in reality it is meant for the hero. This is another kind of language use in the poem (No.3.2.1.6).
3.2.1.2. Poems of category 2 - The use of phrases in opposition

The use of phrases in opposition leading to the binary opposition of kalavu: karpu is another aspect of language use found in the poems.

(1) Poem 2, Akanânûru

The utterance is by the friend and the listener is the hero. The hero meets the heroine during the day, prolongs the tryst. The heroine is kept under house arrest. The friend suggests, as an alternative, the night tryst. Also, she indicates that vêîkai has blossomed and it is time for the full moon to appear, thereby she implies that it is the auspicious period for marriage. By this kurippumali ‘words of hint’ or pragmatics, the hero is advised to marry the heroine. This is one kind of language use (No.3.2.1.3) adopted in the poem.

The hero’s prolonging the tryst is expressed in the poem with the help of karupporul, which leads to uljurai or suggestion. The monkey having drunk the sweet, intoxicated drink finds it difficult to climb the sandal wood tree with a pepper climber around and sleeps on a flowery bed.

This kind of language use (as example for No.3.2.1.1.) is quite common and by suggestion it indicates that the hero is prolonging the tryst and is not attempting to marry the heroine. Following this, the phrases in opposition, equating with kalavu the premarital phase of love and karpu the marital phase of love, are brought out in the following manner.

Kuriyâ împam eîlitil ninmalaippal vêru vilaîkum eytum nâta
kurîtta împam niâakku evûg ariya?

Even the different kinds of animals in your mountainous region enjoy the pleasure which is not intended. If this is so, how it is not possible for you to obtain the pleasure which is intended? At the inner level, the pleasure not intended by animals becomes kalavu, premarital love and the pleasure intended by human beings becomes karpu, marital love and this kind of language use (No.3.1.2) is quite unique.

(2) Poem 18, Akanânûru

The same kind of language use is found in Poem 18, (Akanânûru) also.

The speaker of the poem is the friend and the listener is the hero. The hero prolongs the night tryst. The friend advises him to come during the day to have a meeting with the heroine in places where others may be present,
implying thereby that he must marry the heroine. This is pragmatics (No.3. 2.1.3).

The description of the perilous path in the poem runs as follows. The flow of the forest river dashes against the wild male elephant drags him away and this scene may create fear among the onlookers. But the hero crosses such rivers, swimming like a wild pig at mid-night, and visits the heroine.

The use of the phrase ðëûrîlvali ‘harmless path’ in the lines ðëûrîvalikalum payila valankunar ningäka vilukkuvar... meaning thereby that even those who have practised treading on the harmless path, at times err or find it difficult. This triggers the opposite of ‘harmful path’ (though, not used in the poem overtly) and leaves it to the imagination of the readers as to what will happen to those who walk on the harmful path? Further ðëûrûvali ‘harmful path’ and ðëûrilvali ‘harmless path’ at a deeper level suggest kalavu, premarital love and karpu, marital love. In fact the one phrase ðëûrilvali ‘harmless path’ brings out the binary opposition of kalavu: karpu which is quite unique to this poem as for as language use phenomenon (No.3. 2.1.2) is concerned.

3. 2. 1. 3 The use of pragmatics

The use of pragmatics often by kurippumoli ‘word(s) of hint’ motivating the hero to move towards the karpu phase of life from kalavu is another kind.

1) Poem 2, Akanânûru

The utterance is by the friend and the listener is the hero. The hero meets the heroine during the day, prolongs the tryst. The heroine is kept under house arrest. The friend suggests, as an alternative, the night tryst. Also, she indicates that veãkai has blossomed and it is time for the full moon to appear, thereby she implies that it is the auspicious period for marriage. By this kurippumoli ‘words of hint’ or pragmatics, the hero is advised to marry the heroine. This is one kind of language use (No.3. 2.1.3) adopted in the poem.

3.2.1.4 Poems of category 4 - Many karupporul join together in different combinations to form different images

Different sets of karupporul join together to form different imagery to suggest the kalavu: karpu dichotomy.

(1). Poem 42, Akanânûru

The speaker of the poem is the friend and the listener is the heroine.
The hero, who all the while indulged in premarital clandestine love, now proceeds to the heroine’s place to marry her - called *varaivu malital* in Tamil. The poems of this sub-theme belong to category 3.

The heroine’s physical beauty is described in the poem by using images of rain as well as of greenery. Following are the lines of the poem.

*malipeyal kalitta māripittikkattuk*  
*kovalaru nilaiya peyalēr maṇamukaic*  
*Ceverin urañum koḻunkatul maḻaikęn*  
*talirēr meṅi māyōye!*

The words modifying the physical features of the heroine are *peyal* ‘rain’, *māri* ‘rain’, *maḻai* ‘cool/rain’. The words ‘cool’ and ‘rain’ together create the rain image and the words *talir* ‘tender, green’ *ma* ‘tender / pale’ together create the greenery image. That is to say that the ‘rain’ and ‘greenery’ images together at the second level represent the marital phase.

Following is a diagrammatic representation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Level</th>
<th>Second Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words: Physical features of heroine</strong></td>
<td><strong>Images</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *peyal* ‘rain’, *māri* ‘rain’,  
*maḻai* (kkan) ‘cool/rain’ | → **Rain** |
| *talir* ‘tender /green’,  
*mā* ‘tender / pale’ | ↓  
| | → **Greener** |
| | → **Marital Phase** |

The gist of the lines of the poem is as follows: Because of the failing of rain, the town has a famine, the plough lies inactive, and ponds are empty to which birds migrate no more.

Here, the empty ponds to which birds no more migrate create the ‘drought imagery’, which at the second level represents the *kaḻavu* phase. The diagrammatic representation is as follows:

[Diagram of Empty ponds which birds do not visit → Drought Imagery → Kaḻavu]

The following lines of the poem say that the torrential rain has filled (such of the empty ponds) on a joyful dawn of the day. This creates a rain imagery which represents the *kaṟpu* phase.
Here the drought versus rain is equated with kalavu versus karpu (i.e. drought: rain: kalavu: karpu).

The last three lines of the poem create the image of ‘exaltation’ which suggests, at the second level, the esteemed karpu life the lovers are going to have. The diagrammatic representation is as follows.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Level</th>
<th>Second Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words: denoting height</td>
<td>Imageries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oïki ‘heightened’</td>
<td>➔ Great height/ Exaltation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uyar(varai) ‘the peak of the hill’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vântûy) ‘reaching great height’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The poem begins with a hint, the anticipated marital phase through rain and green images. Subsequently it points out the fading of kalavu, which is going to be replaced by karpu the marital phase of life. In the last sentence of the poem, not only the karpu phase, but also its greatness is suggested.

(2). Poem 27, Narïnai

The dichotomy of drought versus rain images equating with kalavu: karpu is found in another poem viz. Narïnai, which runs into 11 lines. Similar to the earlier poem of Akanânûr 42, the speaker is the friend and the listener is the heroine. The hero, who has been indulging in premarital love life, now has proceeded to the heroine’s place to marry her. The first image in the beginning of the poem viz. the female monkey eating the millet along with the male monkey, suggests the lovers’ marital life, in future. The second image at the end of the poem brings out the dichotomy of kalavu: karpu in the following manner. Like the rain which comes down when all the ponds of the region are without water (i.e. the drought season), like the rain at midnight which benefits the withered paddy crop, the hero has arrived. Here the drought and rain images could be equated with premarital kalavu life and marital karpu life, respectively. (Rain is the hero and the withered paddy crop in the parched lands is the heroine).
Unlike the earlier Akanánûr poem 42, which offers scope to be elaborated and which makes a vivid presentation of the dichotomy of kaḻavu: karpu with the help of the formation of four images (with a number of karupporaḻ, the Naṟṟinai poem has only two images in its presentation.

3.2.1.5 The use of the grammatical word with an inherent dual meaning leading to kaḻavu: karpu dichotomy.

The grammatical word having an inherent dual meaning suggests the love phases in opposition.

In poem 42 of Akanánûr (Refer 3.2.1.4) the use of the infinitive form of the grammatical word (ceyave vaypāṭṭu vigaiyeccam) viz. tuñca in the poetic line nāḻu varaikāra nānçistiunable, meaning ‘the plough lay idle (or inactive) because of drought in the region’, brings out subtly the dichotomy of kaḻavu: karpu in the following manner. The word tuñca, because of being infinitive in nature, inherently has two grammatical meanings: (i) present and (ii) future. That is the word tuñca indicates that at present the plough remains idle because of drought, which in turn suggests that at present it is the pre-marital kaḻavu life. In future, it may not be the case, because of rain etc., i.e., the plough may become active, by which it is suggested that in future, there will be a marital karpu phase of life.

The diagrammatic representation is as follows:

Had the poet used the past participle form of the word i.e. tunci then it would have given only one meaning that is the plough remained idle once and for all; then there would have been no possibility of equating the word tuñca with the kaḻavu: karpu dichotomy. This kind of language use, which is unique in nature, appears to be rare.

3.2.1.6 The entire discourse as addressed to the hero transforms into an advice to Hero

The whole utterance addressed either to friend or heroine but intended for hero who is with in earshot - ciraippuṟam - and the use of this technique
is known as *ciraippurakkilavi*, where in suggestion (through pragmatics) is given to hero to move towards *karpu* life.

Examples to illustrate the above points are given in this section, in the course of the analysis of individual poems.

The concept known as *ciraippurakkilavi* is predominant in the poems of *Narxinai*, *Ainikugunyru* and *Kuguntokai*, as, for example, poem 8 of *Akananuru* discussed earlier (see section 3.2.1.1). Though this aspect is common to all those poems, they often differ from anthology to anthology in the presentation of the *kalavu: karpu* dichotomy.

In the poems of *Narxinai*, *kalavu* is presented both through *uljurai* and the aftermath, namely the extreme anguish of the heroine (as in poem 36, *Narxinai*) and through overt references through the anguish of the mother (as in poem 53, *Narxinai*). In each case the entire discourse embedded with extreme anguish is meant for the hero.

### 3.2.1.6.1 Poems of *Narxinai*

1. **Poem 36, Narxinai**

   The speaker of the utterance is the heroine. It appears to be a monologue but is meant for the hero.

   The hero prolongs the tryst, gives false promises (the promise of marrying her) and this has had an adverse effect on her health: she has lost her sleep and is kept awake even in the middle of the night. Her anguish is expressed towards the end of the poem through an interrogative sentence viz.

   \[\text{yamattu alarvýppen ýmpalóšu onrip}\
   \text{puraiýl tìmoji poviriyta vraiyetuttu}\
   \text{ának kauvai tákatt}\
   \text{tâneg ilantatí valuńka lûre}\]

   “Why does the town, where lot of people reside and spread gossip (about me), remain awake like me. Has the town also lost its welfare like me?”

   The male tiger killing the female elephant, an *uljurai*, indicates the *kalavu* phase of the lovers. Requesting the hero to go in for the *karpu* - the marital phase is not set forth explicitly within the poem. Rather the entire discourse ending with the anguish of the heroine as addressed to the hero serves the purpose of the presentation of *karpu*.

2. **Poem 53, Narxinai**
The speaker of the utterance is the friend and the listener is the heroine, but the utterance is intended for the hero.

The friend is worried because of the continuation of the tryst but has not revealed the same to the mother.

Seeing the changed state of the health of the heroine, the mother advises her to bathe in the forest river which has (herbal) medicinal value. The friend wonders whether the mother has said this, after knowing fully well the heroine’s affair with the hero or just out of compassion. In this poem also, it may be pointed out that kalavu is presented but karpu is not presented within the realm of the poem.

The phrase, Yânahtuañcinï ën karappavum ... ‘I was scared (because of the prolonging of the tryst) and so hid the same from mother’, brings out the kalavu aspect through pragmatics. The karpu element could be obtained by viewing the entire discourse as addressed to the hero, which points out the difficult, awkward situation the heroine faces because of the hero’s inaction in marrying her. This, in turn, serves as an advice to him to marry her. Thus the kalavu : karpu dichotomy is completed by this kind of language use.

3.2.1.6.2 Poems of Ainikugunu

In the poems 214 and 215, kalavu is portrayed through ullagai and karpu through the subtle inbuilt mechanism of the poem as the entire utterance is meant for the hero.

(1). Poem 214, Ainikugunu

The speaker is the friend; the listener is the heroine but the utterance is meant for the hero who is within earshot.

The hero, who has indulged in clandestine love all those days, due to which the welfare of the heroine is at stake, now decides to go back to his town leaving her behind in anguish. The ullagai is fixed in the beginning of the poem in three lines is as follows: The jack fruits fall on the honey comb (in the crevice of the hillock) to destroy it; such is the town in which the hero lives.

As discussed earlier, kalavu aspect with an accusing tone is built in through ullagai and karpu is implied through pragmatics as the entire discourse is meant for the hero.

(2). Poem 216, Ainikugunu

The speaker of the utterance is the friend, the utterance is addressed to the heroine (visible listener) but meant for the hero (invisible listener).
The hero prolongs the tryst, postponing marriage and due to this heroine’s welfare is jeopardized. The friend refers the hero’s cruel behaviour (in the form of *uljurai* in the poem) which has led to the ill health of the heroine.

*uljurai* in the initial four lines of the poem is as follows:

The male tiger in the forest, with an intention to kill and eat the calf elephant delivered recently by the female elephant, hides in the shadow of the jack fruit orchard; such is the town in which the hero lives.

The male tiger refers to hero. The forest refers to the heroine’s community. The female elephant refers to the heroine. The calf elephant refers to the heroine’s youth. The tiger hiding in the shadow of the jack fruit orchard to eat the calf elephant refers to the hero’s prolonging the tryst to enjoy the heroine’s youth. In this poem also, the *kaḷavu* element is presented through *uljurai* and the *karpu* through pragmatics, viewing the entire discourse as addressed to the hero.

3.2.1.6.3 Poems of Kuruntokai

Poems 25 and 26 of *Kuruntokai*, speak about the premarital love act of the hero, the promise made by him to marry the heroine witnessed by stork and the male monkey. The feeling of the utmost inability, experienced by the heroine and her distress are also expressed, so as to impress upon the hero the necessity to enter into marital life.

(1). Poem 25, *kuruntokai*

The speaker is the heroine and the utterance is addressed to the friend which in fact is meant for the hero.

The gist of the poem is as follows. It is none other than the hero who had indulged with me in the clandestine love act. If he refuses to keep the promise, (the promise of marrying me, made by him), I am helpless. A stork, which was waiting patiently to catch a fish at that scene, is the only other witness (other than the hero himself).

The stork which was waiting to catch a fish becomes *uljurai* through which *kaḷavu* is reinforced.

The Tamil word *kaḷavu* in the poem is very important; as per one reading, the meaning is ‘one who indulge in premarital clandestine love act’, and this strengthens the *kaḷavu* aspect of the poem.

The interrogative sentence in the poem *tāṇatu povppin yān evaṇ ceykô?* ‘If he refuses to keep up his promise, it is pitiful, what I can do?’; and the
sentence kurukum unçu tâŋ mañanta ŋârge ‘also there was stork which witnessed the clandestine act of the hero’ are expressions which are supposed to evoke a positive response from the hero, who is said to be overhearing these, and act as implicit appeals for marital life. The kaḷavu: karpu dichotomy is thus presented in this poem.

(2). Poem 26, kuruntokai

The speaker is the heroine and the message of the poem is intended for the hero who overhears the same. The poem begins with uḻurai.

The peacocks on the branches of the vēṅkai tree appear like damsels who pluck flowers; such is the place in which the hero lives. If he refuses to accept the performance of the clandestine act - which is unbecoming of him (takâŋ polattâŋ titumoliyinum in the poetic line) - the male monkey, the father of the young ones, who was there at the scene, is the other witness.

kaḷavu: karpu dichotomy gets established subtly, in the poem in the very beginning through uḻurai.

The plucking of the flowers in the tree by peacocks appears, in the first instance, to be an act that spoils the beauty of the tree. However, this very act of the peacocks adds beauty to the scene. Like wise, though the hero’s prolonging of the tryst at present appears to lead to the spoiling of the welfare of the heroine, the hero ultimately will marry the heroine and protect her wellbeing.

This kind of interpretation becomes possible because of the imagery created in the poem with the help of karupporul (Refer 3.2.1.1.). At another level, the entire utterance is viewed as an utterance meant for the hero (especially the lines where in the male monkey, a witness to the hero’s clandestine love act and the refusal of the same by him etc. is mentioned) to evoke a positive response from the hero, so that he would marry the heroine. In other words, two kinds of language use at different levels in different layers are found in this poem.

If the hero is not brought in as the invisible listener who is within earshot, many of these poems may remain poems which narrate nothing but the anguish of the heroine at the premarital love life, which does not take her anywhere near to the marital phase of life. Then they remain poems of kaḷavu - premarital life only, without the rich suggestions and associations brought in by the implied karpu, marital life.
Colophon

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NOTES

1. Tol. Porul Sutra 5 runs as follows:

mâyôn mēya kāṭuṟai ulakamum
cēyōn mēya maivarai ulakamum
vēntaṁmēya tīmpuṟal ulakamum
varuṇañ mēya peru mañal ulakamum
mullai kuṟiṅći marutum neytalęgac
collivya muṟaiyār collavum patumē

“The forest region ascribed to Mâyôn the hillyregion ascribed to Cēyōn the fertile region ascribed to Vēntaṁ and the littoral region ascribed to Varuṇañ are called in akam convention, as mullai, kuṟiṅći, marutum and neytal respectively” (Manavalan, 2007).

2. But as per one observation, the compilers appear to have not followed the convention strictly and uri appears to play a dominant role (Takanobu Takashi 1951:69).

3. Tol. Porul. Sutra Nos.3 and 4 run as follows.

mutal karu uripporuḷ enga múngē
nuvaluṅ kāḷai muṟai ciṟantaṅave
pāṭaluṅ payṅravai nāṭuṅ kāḷai - 3

“Considering the literary usage mutal porul, karupporul and uripporuḷ are the three important constituents by which in the above order of occurrence the tinai of an akam poem is determined” (Manavalan, 2007).

mutaleṅgaṇ patuvatu nilamboḷu tiranṭiṅ
iyalpeṅa muḷipā iyalpuṇarṅ tōre - 4

“Expert poeticians and scholars say that aspects of space and time constitute the mutal porul” (Manavalan, 2007).
References


The scheme of transliteration followed in this paper is that of the Tamil Lexicon.

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