This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with various definitions of proverbs given by different scholars and some explanations about their origin and usage. It also discusses the importance of proverbs as rhetorical devices.

Proverbs are a treasure for any people belonging to a particular society and who speak a common language and have a similar culture. They reflect the way of life of the people belonging to that particular society and their social norms and customs. They are generally passed from one generation to the other orally. They also serve as an available framework of dos and don’ts for the illiterate masses. They are used as the most effective rhetoric devices both by the literate and illiterate masses. They are also known for their great sense of humor, jest, exaggeration and very artistic use of words or sounds. Further use of metaphor, antithesis, parallelism, alliteration, rhyme makes them very appealing pieces of verbal art. Once an expression becomes a proverb, it becomes part of popular wisdom and the users are no longer interested in its origin. Also the language used in proverbs is sometimes archaic and epigrammatic, or just a play of words. But to be a popular piece of public consciousness, proverbs have to be beautiful. That is what makes them different from aphorisms (short phrases that say something true or wise) or adages (well known phrases that express a general truth about people or the world). As proverbs are pre-formulated and pre-fabricated generalized statements and as they are preserved in their old form of language and style, they provide the missing links in the study of development of any language, which is constantly evolving and changing. They are also most effective in political discourse.

The origin, history, dissemination and meaning of individual proverbs and their variants are interesting areas of study for philologists, folklorists and cultural historians for a long time, as they reflect the attitudes, mentality or worldview of various social classes at different periods of time. They study and document how proverbs were used in different historical periods. Proverbs belonging to a particular group or that can be grouped under a theme, like proverbs
pertaining to women, marriage, etc. also interest them. They also study the cultural realia present in individual proverbs belonging to different cultures, more so in proverbs that have similar meaning.

As regards the origin and distribution of proverbs in European context, Mieder proposes four sources. Of course he clarifies this point that similar issues have occurred in the dissemination of proverbs in Asian, African, and other linguistic and cultural groups.

These four sources are – Greek and Roman antiquity, Bible, Medieval Latin and reverse movement of proverbs from United States to Europe. The common European proverbs in the classical times were loan translated from the same sources, i.e. Greek and Roman classics. Translation of Bible into different European languages is also a source for European proverbs. Latin was also one of the sources for the European proverbs, since it had the status of lingua franca in middle ages. The American influence on Europe and the dissemination of modern English texts throughout Europe through the emergence of English as new lingua franca since middle of twentieth century is another source for the spread of American proverbs across Europe.

There are several definitions of proverbs given by different scholars. I would like to summarize the definition of proverbs as “sentences of the folk which contain the essence of their wisdom and experience.

The proverbs of a nation are based on its unique cultural background. Since humans have much in common, one can find universal proverbs, which are similar in all languages and cultures. But humans also have much in difference. These differences make proverbs culture-specific and thus they differ from language to language based on the traditional customs, religions, historical stories, literature works and so on. Hence, the translation of German proverbs into Telugu (which is one of the languages spoken in south India) is an interesting research topic.
The second chapter deals with a brief introduction to Translation Studies and review of literature. It also deals with translation theory and translation of proverbs in general.

Earlier translation was studied as a language-learning methodology or as part of comparative literature, in translation workshops and as part contrastive linguistics course. James Holmes, a Holland scholar made a scientific division of translation studies and paved way for the discipline called translation studies. Edwin Charles Gentzler claims that ‘Translation Theory’ is not a new field, it is as old as the tower of Babel. He opines that it is central to lexicography, literary theories and in interpreting literature. Roman Jacobson divides translation into three types – intra-lingual translation, inter-lingual translation and inter-semiotic translation. Intra-lingual translation is about translation within the same language, inter-lingual translation deals with the translation between two different languages and inter-semiotic translation from one language (sign system) into other non-verbal sign systems.

As regards translation of proverbs, scholars like Bahman Gorjian, Mollanazar, Nida, Duff, Baker, Pete Unseth and others have come up with their strategies/methods. As part of his three-fold strategy, Bahman Gorjian advocates three hierarchical versions – strong version, moderate version and weak version. The strong version asks the translator to go for exact proverbial equivalent, if there are shared lexical, semantic and conceptual properties existing in both SL and TL. The moderate version asks the translator to go for a partial equivalent, if there are no shared lexical and semantic properties existing in the TL, but, there is a shared concept between the proverbial equivalents in SL and TL. The weak version asks the translator to comprehend and interpret the meaning of the proverb in SL and reproduce the message in the form of a simple statement, if there are no shared lexical, semantic and conceptual properties in the equivalents existing in the TL. These strategies are more or less similar to the strategies proposed by Mona Baker for translation of idioms and fixed expressions. Baker provides an additional strategy of omission, that is, if there is no close match for the idiom or phrase in the TL or if its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, the translator can omit it in the target text.

Mollanazar offers two strategies for translation of proverbs. He says that some similar proverbs can be found in the two languages with more or less similar form, vocabulary and meaning
and also many proverbs having different form and vocabulary may be found in the two languages which have similar meanings and can be applied in the same contexts.

Beekman and Callow say that a proverb may be translated either by the words following the proverb, which serve as the meaning of the proverb or it can be replaced with an equivalent local proverb or its non-figurative meaning could be stated straightforwardly.

Duff suggests ‘literal translation’, putting the ‘original word in inverted commas’, ‘close equivalents’ and ‘non-idiomatic translation’ as different strategies for translating proverbs. But he also says that if there is no appropriate proverbial equivalent in TL, the translator should not force it into the translation.

Nida opines that proverbs are special metaphoric expressions and the translator should know the proverbial concepts in SL/TL regarding their similarities and differences.

Pete Unseth suggests a three-phase plan for translating Biblical proverbs as follows:

1. To collect a number of proverbs in the receptor language. (Around 200)
2. To analyze the techniques used by the receptor language in forming these proverbs.
3. To practice deliberately applying these techniques in translating non-Biblical proverbs, then later Biblical proverbs.

The third chapter is devoted to the study of the translation of cultural elements, which will help understand the cultural issues that arise in translation between German and Telugu in general and in particular in translating proverbs, as proverbs contain a lot of cultural elements. The imagery embodied in the proverbs is based on culture, as proverbs evolve from social relations and cultural environments of the people. Apart from other books and articles, three translations are chosen as case studies in this chapter.

Edward Sapir opines that a language spoken by a group of people is a guide to their social reality. People express their customs, habits, value systems etc. through their language. They
learn about their culture through language, as culture is transmitted through language. Therefore language and culture of a given society become interwoven. Eugene Nida says that knowing the appropriate meaning of a nonlinguistic event also depends on the context of who does what, when, where, and for what reason, just as the meaning of the word run depends largely on contexts: the dogs were running, the salomon are running, he is running into debt, his nose is running.

Archer Taylor noted that the same message of a proverb may be expressed by various proverbs using different images. Matti Kuusi while quoting the proverbs: “He who is bitten by a snake fears even a robe” and “Whoever is burned by hot milk blows on cold yogurt”, observed that the “same or similar message may be communicated by different images”. The Russian folklorist, G. N. Premyakov, emphasized the importance of study of proverb image. Premyakov quotes the following proverbs in his book: 1. You cannot wash coal of blackness; 2. You cannot wash a black dog white; 3. A crow will not become white however hard you rub it; 4. A dark thing cannot be made white by washing; 5. No matter how hard you beat an ass, it will not turn into a mule and maintains that all these proverbs convey one message: “A bad thing will not become a good thing, no matter what you do with it.” He calls this the underlying logical frame. He uses the name ‘realia’ for the images and objects that the above proverbs include (such as coal, dog, etc.). He states that the logical frame is cross-cultural and general and the realia is local, regional or national. The author questions Premyakov’s interpretation of the meaning of logical frame of the above proverbs. He asks why, for example, the ass in proverb No. 5 should be considered bad and mule good. Why should the blackness of coal be considered bad? Finally the author opines that the core images and objects that the proverbs refer to have an unbreakable bond with the logical frame and message. The core realia is culture specific and message bound. It correlates with cultural change.

In the Telugu translations of the Grimm stories most of the cultural elements like personal names, animals, food items etc. are adapted to the Telugu readership, whereas in the German translation of the Telugu story, the names of the characters are kept unchanged and also the other cultural elements are not adapted to the German readership. But in both the cases, translations of some of the cultural elements are omitted. In the third translation, the author followed more or less the foreignization strategy except in case of translation of food items. Hence, it is very tricky to translate the cultural elements or the culture specific words. They
are no particular norms to be followed in general. It is for the translator to decide according to the tastes of the target readership. His role as a decision maker becomes more important. He should do a balancing act.

The fourth chapter deals with the translation of German proverbs into Telugu and evaluation of the strategies. The strategies suggested by different scholars regarding the translation of proverbs are evaluated. All the objectives of this research are addressed in this chapter.

Firstly, the translations of the proverbs which are specific to German culture are evaluated followed by the translations of other proverbs. The German proverbs here are classified into different heads based on their concept like hard work, luck and ill-luck, etc.

Further, the translations cited by Meenakshi Reddy and M.W. Carr are also discussed relating them to the three strategies that are chosen to understand the translation of proverbs. The issues relating to the cultural similarities and differences are also looked into.

Three different strategies – literal translation, close or partial equivalent/conceptual equivalence strategy and paraphrase strategies, suggested by different scholars for the translation of proverbs, have been evaluated. Generally for the translation of proverbs which are very specific to German culture, the partial/close equivalent strategy does not work. Literal translation or paraphrase of literal translation may be used. They can also be translated in accordance with their concept. For proverbs, which are universal in nature or which are not very specific to German culture, all the three strategies are used.

All the 7 proverbs which are very specific to German culture are translated using ‘literal translation’ method. For proverbs 2, 4, 6 and 7 paraphrase of the literal translation is also given. The ‘close/partial equivalent’ All the 7 proverbs which are very specific to German culture are translated using ‘literal translation’ method. For proverbs 2, 4, 6 and 7 paraphrase of the literal translation is also given. The ‘close/partial equivalent’ strategy could not be employed here, since the proverbs are very specific to German culture. Hence, it may be concluded that ‘literal translation’ method is ideal in case the translator fails to find a close/partial equivalent. But one has to check the literal translation, as sometimes it may not make sense in the target culture, as in case of proverb 4: “Scherben bringen Glück.” (ibid)
Here the literal translation doesn’t make sense in Telugu culture, as breaking of things is considered as a bad omen. Hence, breaking of coconut into two equal halves, when offered to God is cited as a translation for this proverb.

In the translation of the German proverb “Eine Eiche fällt nicht auf einen Streich” Duff’s strategy of putting the original word in inverted commas was also employed along with the ‘literal translation’ and ‘paraphrase’ strategies.

The other proverbs which are not very specific to German culture are classified into ten different heads like hard work, luck and ill-luck, laziness, women, stupidity, practicality, truth and lies, control and guarding, irony and other miscellaneous proverbs. These are 28 proverbs in all. Almost all these proverbs are translated using all the three methods and all the translations are found okay.

In her trilingual dictionary Meenakshi Reddy states that the English and Telugu equivalents given by her are determined by the source language, i.e. German. She opines that this would contain the ‘transmission loss’. She further explains that in providing equivalents to some of the phrases which are culturally alien concepts in Telugu like ‘zum Wohl’(=cheers); ‘gute Besserung’(=get well soon) or ‘gute Nacht’(=good night) and also for some fruit, trees, vegetables and items of food, which have no equivalents in the Telugu vocabulary, the meanings have been either paraphrased or explained. She adds that sometimes, the English word has been transliterated into Telugu, either because Telugu has no equivalent or because the English word has become an integral part of Telugu vocabulary.

Majority of the translations cited by Meenakshi Reddy are based on literal translation or paraphrase strategy. For the proverb: “Durch Schaden wird man klug”, she has cited the literal translation of a Hindi proverb ‘doodh kaa jalaa huaa chaach ko bhi phuukh marke piitaa hain’. Almost all the translations and equivalents cited by her are okay, except one of the two equivalents cited for the proverb “Wie du mir, so ich dir”, which reads as ‘enuguku kaalu viriginaa, doomaku rekka viriginaa samaanam’. This, I believe, is not in line with the concept of the given proverb. The other equivalent cited, which reads as ‘veeTaku veeTa, maaTaku maaTa’, suits very well.
Out of the 15 proverbs cited under M.W. Carr translations, equivalents are cited for 14 proverbs and a translation is given for the remaining proverb. The translation given is based on paraphrase strategy and the equivalents cited are based on close/partial equivalent strategy.

The translations done using ‘paraphrase’ strategy are explanations of the concepts of the given German proverbs. Often when an equivalent is paraphrased, another equivalent is formed. Sometimes a proverb-like translation is formed.

As regards the translations done using ‘literal translation’ strategy, all of them were found to be literal translations / meanings of given German proverbs. Also some of the literal translations sound like proverbs.

The literal translation strategy is omitted for the following two proverbs, but the other two strategies were used in their translations.

*In der Not frisst der Teufel Fliegen* (When there is necessity, the devil eats flies) – Here “devil eating flies” looks odd for the Telugu audience. The following two equivalents are cited for this proverb, wherein the 1st conceptual equivalent is cited by Meenakshi Reddy and the 2nd is suggested by me through paraphrase strategy: 1. *kaale kaDupuku manDee booDida*. 2. *kaale kaDupuku manDee ganji*. (ibid)

*Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert.* (Who doesn’t care about cents isn’t worthy to keep a dollar) – Here the literal translations of the cultural images “Pfennig” and “Taler” look odd for the Telugu audience. The following translations are cited keeping the social and cultural aspects in mind: 1. *cinnamottaaniki viluva nivvani vaaDu pedda mottaaniki arhuDu kaaDu* 2. *ruupaayi dacukoovaTam caatakaanivaaDiki veelenduku?* (ibid)

Often the cultural images in a proverb are metaphors. They help the translator to understand the meaning of the proverb and hence in translating / finding an equivalent. The metaphor found in the source language proverb may not be the same in target language equivalent. But they serve as partial or near equivalent to each other. Some of the examples are cited below:
In the 6th proverb under 4.1, the metaphor ‘Eiche’ (=oak tree) represents a big tree with a hard trunk. In one of the Telugu translations ‘marri ceTTU’ (=banyan tree) is used as an equivalent to oak tree, as it is also big and has a strong trunk. Same instance can be noticed in the Telugu translation of the Grimm brothers’ story “Sechse kommen durch die ganze Welt”, wherein ‘Eichbaum’ (=oak tree) in the German text is replaced by ‘raavi ceTTu’ (=peepal tree) in the Telugu translation. (ibid)

In the 3rd proverb under 4.3, the metaphor ‘Fliegen’ (=flies) denotes food. The metaphor in one of the Telugu equivalents ‘ganji’ (=starch) also denote food.

In the 4th proverb under 4.3, the metaphor ‘gebratene Taube’ (=roasted pigeon) is substituted by ‘annam’ (=food) in one of the Telugu equivalents.

In the 5th proverb under 4.3, the metaphor ‘Glas’ (=glass) is substituted by ‘puvvulu’ (=flowers) in the Telugu equivalent. Both the metaphors represent things which get destroyed easily.

In the 13th proverb under 4.3, the metaphors ‘Katze’ (=cat) and ‘Mäuse’ (=mice) are substituted by ‘poolii’ (=name of a woman) and ‘atta’ (=mother-in-law). As mice fear the cat, the woman fears the mother-in-law.

In the 5th proverb under 4.4, the metaphor ‘Frosch’ (=frog) is substituted by ‘kukka’ (=dog) in the Telugu equivalents. Both of them do not deserve any honour, as they get attracted to filth.

As regards the cultural similarities and differences between German and Telugu proverbs, the study proved that there are universal characteristics for majority of the Telugu and German proverbs. Despite differences in the German and Telugu cultures this research found similarities in the way the German and Telugu proverbs grouped under similar heads express ideas, attitudes and reactions. One could find only some differences in the cultural elements used in the proverbs. Though proverbs vary across cultures, one can still understand and translate them by using natural cognitive mechanisms, keeping the concept of the proverb in mind.
Once the translator understands the concept of the proverb of a source language, he/she can choose an appropriate equivalent, by choosing a proverb which explains the same concept in the target language. Then the cultural images/metaphors of the source and target proverbs, though different and have different meanings, do not create any problem in conveying the concept. They substitute each other automatically. This way there can be more than one equivalent to a proverb in the target language, as shown in the examples above. Often the translator can paraphrase a conceptual equivalent and find another conceptual equivalent to a source proverb. Sometimes the paraphrase strategy may not yield an equivalent, but still the translation sounds like a proverb. Also if two different proverbs express similar concept, the same equivalent can be cited to both of them, as evident in proverbs 1 and 2 under 4.2.3.

Since conceptual equivalences were cited as translational equivalents for majority of the proverbs, I suggest that the translator has to first understand the concept of the source language proverb and then look for equivalents in the target language which are similar / close to the concept of the source language proverb. If the translator has problem(s) in finding the equivalents to the cultural image(s) of the source language proverb, then s/he may put the original word in inverted commas as suggested by Duff. In case the translator could not find conceptual equivalence, s/he may go for literal translation. But one should take care that the literal translation makes sense for the target culture, i.e. it is in line with the social and cultural aspects of the target language speakers. If the literal translation is not making sense, then the translator may translate the proverb keeping the concept of the source proverb in mind, as in case of proverb 4 under 4.1(ibid). This strategy becomes useful in translating the proverbs which are very specific to source culture. It should not be viewed as similar to conceptual/partial equivalent strategy, though all the conceptual equivalences will be in line with the concept of the source proverbs.

5.1 Contribution to the Field

This study evaluated the existing strategies suggested for the translation of proverbs. It provided conceptual / partial equivalents to majority of the German proverbs in Telugu. As regards proverbs, for which conceptual / partial equivalents did not exist in Telugu, proverb-like translations were provided. Regarding translation of cultural images in proverbs, they were translated keeping the social and cultural aspects of Telugu speakers in mind. Though
the study does not suggest any theory for the translation of proverbs in general, it shows how the translator can use different strategies like ‘Literal translation’; ‘Conceptual equivalence’ and ‘Paraphrase’ strategies in finding the conceptual / partial equivalents or translations for the given proverbs and especially if the literal translation is not making sense, then the translator may translate the proverb keeping the concept of the source proverb in mind. This strategy becomes useful in translating the proverbs which are very specific to source culture. It also shows how the cultural elements in the proverbs are translated and thereby addresses how to overcome the problems triggered by the cultural differences in the translation of proverbs. This may be considered as the fourth strategy for translating proverbs across cultures. In this case we don’t find any shared lexical or semantic properties, but at the conceptual level we find a similarity. This is a new strategy that I have used in translating some proverbs from German into Telugu. This is the new strategy, the fourth one, which I would like to add to the three strategies proposed by the earlier scholars. This strategy can be used in case all the three strategies fail. However, this strategy needs to be studied further with more data from German and other languages.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

All the above proverbs are selected in isolation, i.e. without a co-text. Even while analyzing the Telugu translations of 17 Grimm brothers’ stories and the Telugu translation of the German novel ‘Das fliegende Klassenzimmer’ and the German translation of the Telugu short story ‘paDava prayaanam’ of Palgummi Padmaraju in chapter 3, no direct translations of the proverbs were found, though some normal sentences were translated as proverb-like sentences. Therefore, the study of the translation of proverbs out of context is a limitation of the present study and is open for further research.

5.3 Scope for Further Research

The present study covered only the translation of German proverbs into Telugu and the related cultural issues in translation. It did not focus on the translation of idioms and metaphors. Therefore, there is a scope for further research in the translation of German idioms and metaphors into Telugu. Also, the proverbs for this study were selected out of context, which is a limitation of the present study. Hence, there is also scope for study of the translation of German proverbs in a context in future.