CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, the procedures, techniques, analyses, sociophonological correlation and correlates were discussed. In this section, a discussion on the results of the study is presented.

An attempt has been made in chapter IV to describe the variations of the total informants. This does not associate the phonological variations with the social background of the informants, and at the same time this chapter has listed out the phonological variations that could be correlated with the social factors selected for the study. The socially affected variations of the phonological elements have been explained with enough statistical measures in chapter V. Of the five phonological elements, vowels and diphthongs could not develop the change of complete sound system, except the changes identified from the given words or passages and from the words commonly found among the informants. Laterals and voice of the plosives also have shown the sociophonological changes but the nasalization of vowels was identified as the stylistic variation only irrespective of the social differences. The characteristics of the social and phonological variables are described in detail in chapter VI, which has also included
the contextual speech styles of pronunciation. The learning problems with reference to the present study and in general are dealt with appropriate remedial measures.

As far as the vowels are concerned /a/ shows much variations then followed by /u, i, o, e/ respectively. They could be correlated with the age/class of study, social class and with the domicile of the informants. In diphthongs only /ai/ changed in few occurrences where as in one context /aa/ changed to /ɔj/. These variations were brought out by the social class and domicile of the informants. The results of the analyses of laterals had brought out that only the retroflex continuant lateral could not maintain its quality. It changed mostly to retroflex lateral and sometimes to alveolar lateral. Then followed the retroflex lateral and alveolar lateral. Of all the three laterals, alveolar lateral has been maintained better than the other laterals. The laterals were found to be correlating with the domicile of the informants and the retroflex continuant lateral alone had developed an association with the class/age of the informants. The voice of the plosives in the word initial position found both voiced and voiceless plosives in its place. As regarding the use of voiced plosives the urban informants were found to be more in number, whereas the rural informants were found to be less. As against this, in the
case of voiceless plosives the rural informants were more and the urban informants were less. Voice had been also differentiated based on the sex of the informants. In the word initial position, male speakers used more voiced plosives, whereas female speakers used it less. At the same time, more female speakers and less male speakers were found to be using voiceless plosives. A study of the intervocalic voice has helped to identify the tribal informants maintaining the voiceless velar fricative with a high percentage and the urban area with a less percentage. It also shows that female speakers were interested in using voiceless velar fricative and the male speakers in using voiced velar plosive. The voice of the post nasal plosives was not socially affected. Nasalization could be described as a stylistic variation only. The present research has proved that strong correlations are treated as an unavoidable facet of the community where people are socially associated.

After studying the speech behaviour of the tribal informants the social classes of the informants, which were first divided into three as forward class, backward class and scheduled class/scheduled tribes, later the results of tribal speech behaviour were separated.

The combination of sounds differs according to the class of the informants. The first standard informants were
identified with some specific differences in their speech behaviour like deleting some sounds or syllables in the casual and careful speech contexts. For example,

\[ /\text{vantuttu}/ \rightarrow /\text{vantut[}\phi]/ \]

'having come'

This could be avoided by teaching the spoken style of the language. The second standard informants were identified with some difficulties in reading. As compared to the other informants, the third standard informants were able to maintain the quality of the sounds to some extent.

The Tamil script system causes problems in reading especially in the case of plosives it has been found to be more. The Tamil plosives do not have separate graphemes for the allophonic variations. This situation has confused the students in selecting the sounds. Sometimes they use voiced plosives in the oral use and switch over to voiceless plosives in the reading style. The children are not able to identify the representation of the graphemes. This kind of problem is also possible among the foreign learners. The present study also has brought out this situation and has evaluated the quality of such sounds under the sub-heading 'voice'. It was evident that the students have used both voiced and voiceless plosives in the initial level, and have used voiced velar plosive and voiceless velar fricative in
the intervocalic position. It was also clear that the students who have used voiced plosives or voiced velar plosive in the initial position or in the intervocalic position were more in the casual and careful speech contexts as compared to the reading speech contexts. While reading, the percentage of using voiced plosives was less.

To improve both oral and reading style the teacher should teach the speech sounds and the written representation simultaneously. In language teaching/learning situation, the use of audio-video materials improves the teaching and learning effectively. The teacher should use drills and exercises based on discrimination and identification of sounds in isolation and in words for correct pronunciation. For difficult sounds, specific reinforcement techniques should be proposed and also contrast pairs of sounds help the learner to pronounce correctly.

It would be useful to teach/learn the speech sounds of the Tamil language, if an audio-video material is prepared having in mind the variations that have been identified through this research. This increases the interest of both the teacher and learner. This is more helpful for the foreign learners also. While learning the Tamil language the foreign learners or second language
learners end up with speaking the written variety of the language. To avoid this the teacher should differentiate the spoken and written varieties by giving adequate illustrations when he teaches the language. While teaching speech sounds, the teacher has to pay more attention to teaching vowels. The consonants have definite place and manner of articulation whereas the vowels do not have such places of reference and hence, they fluctuate.

In a student's life, of all stages of education, his primary education is compared to be more fundamental and also important. So it is very essential that he has to learn the language more clearly and correctly at this stage. The teacher is appreciated if he follows appropriate teaching methodology instead of keeping syllabus oriented.

This study could suggest the teachers or the material producers or the language planners to follow a standard pattern of language as well as teaching. Preparation of standard Tamil phonological pattern is useful for second language teaching also. If the Tamil phonological pattern with allophonic variation is readily available, it could be compared with the pattern of the second language to find out the similar and dissimilar sounds. Through this the second language teacher would be able to pay a separate attention on dissimilar sounds and teach them successfully.
Future Perspectives

The researcher apart from identifying sociophonological variables was interested in some other aspects of the language also. It would be useful, if each social class of the students is studied separately and concentrating deeply on their social background including the home environment, one would find the whole phonological system of each social class. With the help of this, it can be easily identified whether each group follows any particular phonological system.

The foreign learners after learning Tamil end up with speaking the written variety. Instead of correlating this problem with the diglossic situation, the teacher should teach the language with the differentiation of the spoken variety. The structural changes of the language including phonology between the written and spoken varieties should be taught to the foreign learners.

Another interesting feature identified through this research was the intonation difference among the tribal informants. If a study could be carried out focussing on the casual speech behaviour of the tribal students among themselves without their knowledge, it would clearly differentiate the learning problems of tribal and non tribal students. Based on the present research these areas could be studied in future.