Chapter II
Language Structure of Tamil
CHAPTER - 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Research methodology is a set of procedures adopted for collecting the data, analysing and presenting the results of the analysis with reference to the hypothesis formulated in relation to the study undertaken. With reference to language use in specific domains the methodological aspects may differ according to the micro or macro level of focus given or the horizontal or vertical mode of study. The present study tries to expose the structural peculiarities of the language used in news papers that were chosen for this study to give a comparative account of language used in those news papers and to expose the attitude of the readers towards the language use found in those three news papers.

Hence, the methodology adopted for the present study makes use of the data drawn from news papers, and also from the readers through the questionnaire. With regard to analysis, language level is given due consideration and peculiar features of language use in these leavels are collected and presented. An indepth study of the peculiar aspects like head line analysis news story analysis, etc. have not been segregated and analysed in detail, although there is scope for the structural analysis of such delimited contents of news papers. Hence, the research methodology employed in this study is a generalised methodology for identifying language use which has some bearing on processes like identification, comparison and correlation.

Subjects of study

For the sociolinguistic attitude study, data from 120 subjects were collected through questionnaire method. Four social parameters, namely, age, sex, education and profession were choosen for this study and each of these parameters were further sub classified as shown below:

1. Age : Young (upto 20), 2. Middle (21-49) and 3. Old (50 and above)
2. Sex : 1. Male, and 2. Female

For representing each of the sub stratified groups 2 subjects were selected for this study taking the total number to 144. However, due to the gaps in the availability of subjects only 120 of them could be selected for this study. Hence the subjects for the present study are representative of four major social variables.
Analysis of data

Two kinds of data were collected for this study. One from the newspapers and the other from the newspaper readers. In the first set, data were analysed and the phonological, lexical and syntactic peculiar characteristics of each of the newspapers were presented. The responses drawn from the newspaper readers formed the second set of data. Through the analysis of these data, the percentage of readers of each of the newspapers, the specific content option (international, national, regional, etc.) made by the readers, the complexity and simplicity in the language use of newspapers as revealed by the readers (subjects), etc. were identified and presented. The quantification of the data and the statistical presentation were given in the chapter on the comparative study of newspapers.
2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TAMIL LANGUAGE AND ITS STRUCTURE

Language is a unique phenomenon of humanity. Other species do not seem to have any language not withstanding the fact that they do communicate. There is no evidence of the presence of language on the moon. But language is, as said, unique in its own sense. Any language has its own characteristic features and other peculiar aspects.

The structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances. It is considered as a development. Language is necessarily undergoes changes in the course of time which are not restricted. The natural tendency of any language is the process of undergoing change in all its levels. Language changes according to the needs of the society.

Language is symbolic and the symbols show characteristic arrangement. Old English is different from modern English. So also old Tamil is different from modern Tamil. All languages have their system of arrangements. They have phonological and grammatical systems. Under the grammatical systems, morphological and syntactic systems are included. Each language can be described and has a special system suitable for conveying message within its own framework of structure and meaning. The units of language
have very little direct physical relation to the meanings or acts, which it conveys and it should be remembered that language is meaningful.

TAMIL LANGUAGE

Tamil is one of the greatest languages in the world. It is regarded for its antiquity, richness of diction and refined descriptive grammar. It is still regarded for its splendor and the early Tamil grammar, Tolka:ppiyam, clearly brings out the grammatical features. Tolka:ppiyam, deals with not only the grammatical tradition but also with the social structure of the Tamil of those days. Besides, it portrays all the linguistic structures of old Tamil and also the literary theme, prosody, poetics, sentiments, etc.

The study of Tolka:ppiyam is interesting from the point of view of Tamil literature as well as from that of the history of general linguistics and literary studies. The concepts given in this work are related to the view about language. Annamalai states that 'Language is a meaningful object used by people and the object of the grammar is to explicate the meaning and to provide an apparatus for the comprehension of the meaning by the users'. Tolka:ppiyar's view of language is broad which includes the language in content as used in conversation and in literature. The meaning is also viewed broadly to include not only the descriptive meaning but also the suggestive meaning. The grammar, for him, describes the language and its meaning in the above broad sense (E. Annamalai, 1952).
The grammatical structure necessarily undergoes changes as time passes and one can find the difference in the formulation of grammatical rules of old and modern Tamil. The newspapers are considered as one of the best exponents of mass media communication and so the various components of newspapers are to be discussed in detail. Taking into account the three Tamil dailies, namely, Dinamani, Dinamalar and Dinatanti, we can easily identify the characteristic features of each daily by closely studying the grammatical and syntactical features employed in them. The present day situation is more modernised than the earlier period. The social, cultural, commercial and economical conditions are bound to undergo some changes due to the political and other conditions prevailing now. This will have due reflection in the language used in newspapers.

2.1.0 PHONETIC STRUCTURE

According to Tolka:ppiyam Tamil has ten vowel phonemes excluding 'ai' and 'au'. 'ai' and 'au' are called diphthongs. In the consonants, only the velar nasal `n' is not taken as a phoneme but it is considered as an allophone of the velar plosive [k]. Tolka:ppiyam is unique among ancient grammatical work in giving the distribution of the sounds or phonemes. It describes initial, medial and final occurrences of sounds and the nature of clusters. Length is also phonemic, according to this grammar.
Tolka:ppiyar frames certain restrictions about the occurrence of the initial and the final letters. Peculiar sounds like Kurriyalukaram, Kurriyalikaram and a:ytam which were peculiar in Tamil in the period of Tolka:ppiyam were also described in Tolka:ppiyam.

Meenakshinsundram (1965 : 194) clearly states in this connection the following:

'The twentieth century through its radio, newspapers and text books intended to spread universal education, by way of introducing uniformity in usage through the standard dialect which is not however the dialect of any one region or social group but the literary dialect. But in spite of this, the non literary dialects exist and thrive. Even the movies have used nonliterary dialects in their stories.

2.1.1 NEW VOWEL SYSTEM - PHONEMES

In the vowel system many contrasts develop and what were phonetic in nature in a previous age become phonemic later. We can find an important change in contrast with  `u'.

(e.g) Kuttu `a blow'

Kuttu `hit' (an imperative)

The medial short vowel `u' is sometimes written as `a'.

2.1.2 We can notice the change of `i' and `u' in the initial syllable into `e' and `o' respectively, when not followed by a high vowel. This does not occur in more frequent words like `ivan', `this man', `muttai' `an egg', and murrum front
yard. In these cases the occurrence of vowel change creates a pathological homonymic tension and the words become homonymous to words like `evan', `which man', `moţtai', the shaved head and `mottam', `total'.

2.1.3 The pronunciation of the initial vowels at least in certain dialects is showing a tendency which may lead to a change in the syllabic pattern. In many dialects there is a glottal step before `a' or `a'. But all these on-glides can be predicted and therefore they are not at present phonemic.

2.1.4 There is a tendency to create nasal vowel and this is greatly developed now. In the modern period the Tamil dramas try to represent the speech of the lower class with nasal vowels. What is important is that the nasal vowels have become distinct phonemes nowadays.

(e.g) \(\text{avan} \rightarrow \text{ava} \) `he'
\(\text{Vanta:n} \rightarrow \text{Vanta:} \) `came - he'

There is also another development namely the introduction of the voiced plosives as separate phoneme.

(e.g) \(\text{kuru} \) `pimple'
\(\text{guru} \) `teacher'
\(\text{pa:vam} \) `sin'
\(\text{ba:vam} \) `the inner idea'.
2.1.5 Apart from the older vowels both long and short, the nasalised vowels also have become phonemes in modern Tamil. In Tamil they represent the overall pattern of the various dialects. The loan words do occur in many places and the Tamilised forms take their due place in the phonological level like the older are not fully developed. But the changes occur and the statement becomes clear.

2.1.6 Restrictions which were found on the occurrence of consonants in initial position in old Tamil also disappeared in modern Tamil. Even the consonants like 't, r, and l' occur initially.

(e.g) tama:ram 'drum'
    rail  'train'
    lattu  'a sweet edible item'

The prothetic vowel is completely omitted in these words.

2.2.0 MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

Tolka:ppiyam divides words into nouns and verbs. There is another division that classifies words into particles and attributes. According to Meenakshisundaram (1965:74), 'Tolka:ppiyar is referring to the root morphemes by the term uriccol and to all other morphemes by the term itaiccol.

Every sentence contains two kinds of distinct elements. On the one hand, there are units expressing a certain number of percepts or ideas and on the other hand there are units indicating certain relations existing between the former.
2.2.1 Tolka:ppiyam calls the word 'col' and words reflect agglutinative structure in Tamil. Tolka:ppiyam has a method of expressing the pattern found in the words.

According to Tolka:ppiyam, some of the roots in uriccol are synonymous; some are polysemes. These roots can occur as verbal and nominal roots. The distinction between noun and verb is syntactical rather than morphological. The non-root morphemes are tense markers, case markers, particles of comparison, expletives, sound fillers, suggestive particles and inflexional increments.

2.2.2. Tolka:ppiyam explains in detail the various categories of verbs, participles, voices, etc. It narrates how the finite verbs are formed. The verbal roots take the formative suffixes, the tenses markers and pronominal suffixes and hence Tamil language is classified as agglutinative in morphological structure.

2.2.3. Under noun morphology, categories like gender and number, cases, the position of inflexional increments, the number names and the three kinds of pronouns are explained in detail in Tolka:ppiyam.

2.2.4 MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE MODERN TAMIL

Aspects of verb morphology particularly the past tense conjugation of conjunctive and relative participles and finite verbs etc of modern Tamil is similar to those found in
old Tamil. In all cases, the final morph with the longer vowel has been uniformly adopted.

(e.g) ceyta:n - ceytā: `he did'

ce:rn:ta:n - ce:rn:ta: - `he reached'

or

ce:ntā:

The old Tamil verbal participle Kontu that becomes an auxiliary verb in modern Tamil undergoes the following change.

(e.g) Kontu - Konu - k' nu

etuttukkontu - etuttukk'nu. `having taken'

In the present tense `u' ending of the root often disappears. The future is `v' in all the stages. All the roots now end in `u' except those originally ending in `y' which now get `i'.

(e.g) cey - ceyi `to do'

The conjunctive participle and relative participles are as of old but for the changes found in conjugation stated above.

2.2.5 NOUN MORPHOLOGY

Honorific suffixes in modern Tamil became arranged into hierarchies of several social status. The honorific singular is used for the people of importance with social status. The plural suffix `a:r' is added to the masculine or feminine form of nouns as a honorific suffix.

(e.g) A:tittana:r - A:tittan

makala:r - makal `daughter'
Both ar and kal are used for the very important personalities. avarkal is also used to nouns in addition to the epicene plural ar or ar used as honorific singular.

In the letters addressed to the elders in family or society, the term taṅkal is used in the place of unkal.

God is spoken of merely as a third person and the verb also takes the neuter singular form.

(e.g) ca:mi varukiratu - is the respectable form or way of saying that the ascetic is coming.

In some dialects the neuter pronominal ending is used as a honorific form when speaking about the kinds as in the examples given below.

(e.g) annan vantatu / vantuccu - 'the elder brother came'
akka:l vantatu / vantuccu - 'the elder sister came'
tampi vantatu / vantuccu - 'the younger brother came'
taṅkai vantatu / vantuccu - 'the younger sister came'.

Meenakshisundaram (1965 : 124) says 'One may be tempted to argue that the influence of Telugu usage of the neuter for the feminine is here felt. But the neuter singular being applied to the masculine also shows it is an extension of the other usages already mentioned with reference to ascetics'.

2.2.6 NEW SUFFIXES

New suffixes like 'ka:ran' and 'ca:li' are used uniformly

(e.g) mutala:li - 'capitalist'
tolila:li - 'labourer'
pa:tta:li - 'worker'
2.3.0 LEXICAL STRUCTURE

Karunakaran (1978) observes in his work *Studies in Tamil Socio-linguistics* following: "Communication can be defined as social interaction through messages. The role of mass media in national development, social change and international communication has received increasing attention in recent years. There is a close inter-dependence between communication networks and language varieties used in communication systems especially in mass media. The very purpose of mass media is that communication should reach the masses including the remote rural folk easily and effectively".

2.3.1 Any problem of choice with regard to lexical standardisation has to be stated in terms of language maintenance and language acquisition.

Introduction of new lexical usages and expressions in the mass media is not new and uncommon particularly in the Tamil situation. Tamil news media have established their own norms and standards through their own styles from time to time. In the lexical level any word if appropriately used with due modifications can communicate the news adequately simply and efficiently. Besides, the language that could be used in newspapers should have social acquaintance and acceptance and hence the newspapers can borrow the loan words and use them as a normal way of expression.

(e.g) T.V., bus stand, railway station and radio.
Also, new coinages based on loan words can also be in media:

(e.g) television - tolaikka:tci
bus stand - pe:runtu nilayam
railway station - pukaiu:rti nilayam.
radio - va:noli

When some loan words are used as such some graphological modifications are made: Sometimes a prothetic vowel is prefixed with some loan words.

(e.g) Rangana:tan - Arahkana:tan "A name"
la:bam - ila:pam 'profit'
rail - irayil 'train'
lo:kam - ulo:kam 'metal'

Vowel 'u' is suffixed at the end of a loan word sometimes.

(e.g) record - reka:rtu 'record'
cheque - cekku 'cheque'
court - Ko:rttu 'court'
cup - kappa 'cup'

Tamilisation of loan words occur sometimes.

(e.g) hotel - oittal
Kastam - kattam
manushan - manitan
Kamaraj - Ka:mara:car

Loan words are translated into pure items and they are used sometimes.

central government - natuvana:racu
film show - patakka:tci
telephone - tolai pe:ci
black money - karuppuppanam
2.4 SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE

In most of the rural areas, we find a very low percentage of literacy. It is observed that generally only the literary variety of the language or some kind of a standard variety is more commonly used in many of the mass media forms, especially in newspapers and journals. This type of language use makes communication difficult. In order to make the literate networks successful and efficient, the language style used in them should be made simple.

In modern Tamil usages, modernisation of style, diction, etc. takes place at different levels. Through the coinage of technical terms, Tamilisation of loan features, loan blends, etc. and simplification of complex constructions. Language planning process is one of the major processes by which language style is made more simple, adoptable and efficient to convey the modern scientific, technological and other social advancements that take place in various domains of our social activity.

By evolving certain new styles, registers, varieties, patterns, etc. a language is modernised in the sense, that its status is raised on par with some of the so-called developed languages of the world like English. Hence modernisation in the syntactical level has become an important aspect in planning language use in different domains like education, administration and mass media.
The structure of language is very complex. Language has an internal structure consisting of two sub-structures namely expression and content. The smallest unit of full expression is the sentence which may consist of a sequence of words or phrases or clauses arranged according to the grammatical norms of the system of language.

Newspapers are the vigilant custodians of the country, community, society, nature and mankind in general. It is not sufficient that if they are satisfied with their role as mirrors. Mirrors reflect only what is placed before them, while newspapers reflect the hopes, aspirations, developments and evolution of the society.

Newspaper has its own characteristic structure and the language used too has its own special features or peculiarities. Newspaper language and its structure are different from that found in other types of creative writings.

2.4.1 Normally a noun in co-occurrence relationship with a verb gives a complete meaning and thereby forms a sentence.

(e.g) avan vantain `he came`

In Tamil two nouns can form a sentence without the use of any verb and one noun can function as a predicate of a sentence. In Tamil such a noun is called `peyarp payanilai`.

(e.g) avan Murukan `he is Murukan`. 
In sentences the adjectives and the adverbs are always followed by nouns and verbs respectively.

(e.g) \textit{nalla paiyan} `good boy'
\textit{nanku patitta:n} `(he) read well'

Thus the syntactic structures assume a predominant role in languages for the expression of complete thought.

2.4.2 It is interesting to observe in the news media the use of the technique of adopting loan usages coming from different languages and on the basis of the common usages. So, when we find new expressions innovated and used in the news media, we have to take into consideration how all these expressions become acceptable and then made use of in the day-to-day speech behaviour by way of conducting socio-linguistic studies.

Very often we find in newspapers the word order of sentences is changed according to the nature of the news. The head lines seem to be very brief and the readers develop a sort of curiosity to go through the body of the news item. The use of echo and reduplicated words create an interest among the public to go through the dailies and get information about the happenings around the world.

2.4.3 The newspapers publish some of the speeches made by dignitaries and they are expressed making use of their own style and language variety. By doing so, the newspapers try to convey the news using more effective language, more
redundant language, highly literary language and sometimes more common language. When a leader or a social worker or a politician goes through the reported speech of him or her, he or she may be able to pick up some of the usages which are found to be efficient, prestigious, easily adoptable, etc. So, newspapers' language can exert an impact on the readers. Some leaders try to imitate the particular usages found in newspaper style in their public speeches. This type of imitation enhances the occurrence of innovated expressions and propagates the use of newspaper style.

2.5.0 TAMIL DIGLOSSIA

Some languages with a long and rich literary tradition tend to exhibit the phenomenon of diglossia. Tamil perfectly exhibits the concept of diglossia propounded by Ferguson (1986) with its two varieties, namely literary and spoken variety, that occur in two different mutually exclusive environments. The literary or high variety of Tamil is used in formal occasions particularly in print media and the spoken variety or low variety is used in the casual situations particularly in day-to-day interactions.

However at present, a change is taking place and attempts are being made to bridge the gap between these two varieties of Tamil and some of the newspapers have started using the spoken forms in their news items.
Diglossia is always found as one of the major factors for differentiating literate and illiterate Tamil speakers. It seems that a prior condition for a diglossic community is that it should be literate society. In a literate society, the social values, communicative prestige, etc. are decided on the basis of literary orientation. The literate speakers in the Tamil diglossic situation hold in high esteem the values of their culture and tradition.

2.5.1 Arokianathan (1988) in his work on 'Language Use in Mass Media' states that 'Competence in a language is widely held to be the knowledge about that language used by speakers and hearers. In the diglossic situation of Tamil, a real speaker is supposed to know at least his own spoken variety of language which is defined as a unitary dialectal variety within the diglossic system. But there is no strong evidence for the existence of such a homogeneous dialectal variety of spoken Tamil. Speakers of Tamil are generally exposed from an early age to different speech varieties.

2.5.2 Style diversity is a characteristic aspect of any dialect irrespective of whether the linguistic community is diglossic or not. When the community is diglossic, the high variety is shared by all irrespective of their dialect differences and functions. The high variety in diglossia is grammatically more complex and reflects an allegiance to
literary usages. Consequently the high variety in diglossia situation is different and it distinguishes itself from other varieties in its formal style.

Unlike the normal dialects and styles that a person may master for his own use, the high variety in some diglossic languages is difficult to mass and may not come under the linguistic competence of the speakers.