CHAPTER 6

STANDARDIZATION OF LEXICAL USAGES
6. STANDARDIZATION OF LEXICAL USAGES

6.1 General

Standardization with reference to language, in general, involves establishment of a variety (language or language units), as a norm or standard, so as to make it susceptible for use in a homogeneous way by members of a society, speaking a language. Standardization is a myth in one aspect and a reality in another aspect. In those languages where a clear cut demarcation exists between high variety and low variety, a clear cut distinction between standard language variety and non-standard language variety is also seen to a certain extent. So, the people speaking languages with inherent diglossia are aware of the norms of standard while they use language in various functional domains. This awareness of norm is partly conditioned by literacy state of the language speakers, particularly written literacy. As far as Tamil language is concerned, the establishment of the norms of standard, either in spoken or written media of use is governed by the awareness of the written medium of the Tamil language. This holds good both for the selection of language variety and
selection of lexical items of Tamil for special purposes like education, science and technology, medicine, etc.

6.2 Lexical Standardization

Standardization of lexical items is part and parcel of the process of lexical corpus planning. By lexical planning we mean the enrichment of lexical items for a variety of use in different domains which occur due to the development and changing needs of the concerned society.

Standardization of the variant meanings of lexical items belonging to the vocabulary core of Tamil was a common practice in the lexicographical tradition of Tamil. Lexicographers set before them the aim of identifying various contextual use of lexical items, and try to hypothesize the general, common, abstract meanings of lexical items in order to represent them in the dictionary along with words. So, standardization of meaning or meanings attached to lexical items is a common practice among the dictionary makers.

6.2.1 Lexical Standardization Agencies

In certain societies selecting a norm or standard form of lexicon for purposes of general use is assigned to a body
of people consisting of experts. For instance, selection of standard lexical items in French, or creating the lexical items or expanding the meaning of lexical items, etc., are standardized by the Institution of French Academy. That is, the French Academy is the sole authority responsible for designing and screening standardization of French lexical items for public use. With reference to the Tamil situation, no such academy is there for governing and standardizing the lexical items. Whether technical or non-technical, many people are involved in the creation of lexical items in Tamil, according to their needs and abilities. This has resulted in the existence of several lexical equivalents for one and the same loan technical term. Now, awareness is being created to set the direction of standardization process among the group of individuals and institutions in Tamilnadu for the standardization of lexical usages. Institutions like Kalaikkathir, Anna University, Tamil University and Bharathiar University are involved in the standardization process of technical termologies meant for various purposes.

6.2.2 Lexical Standardization Process

As mentioned earlier, standardization is a process involved in the stabilization of a norm which is expected to
be homogeneous, and which could be drawn from a set of items which are heterogeneous in nature. Standardization of lexical items involves creation of lexical items in Tamil in the absence of equivalent terms in Tamil for international technical terms. This could be done through a set of processes like—taking a loan word, with or without graphological modifications, translation of loan words into native forms, creation of loan blends, taking the loan word as the base or selection of one equivalent word from the existing stock of Tamil words for the foreign model.

Another process involved in standardization is the elaboration of lexical items both in number and content giving importance to the deficiency in the use of the technical term in various domains. This involves enriching the delicate meaning of the existing lexical items and the creation of compounds and phrases as equivalents to the delicate technical terms drawn from the international core of lexical items which are available in specialized areas like science, technology, medicine, etc.

Another important factor involved in standardization is the popularization of selected terms drawn from specialized
domains of knowledge through media with reference to the Tamil situation. For Standardization, commonalty and acceptability conditions related to lexical items are fostered by mass media. Most of the technical terminologies which appear in mass media like newspapers, radio, television are readily accepted as standard ones, because they are popular among the masses, and government is also involved in the popularization process. So, ultimately, decisions regarding the acceptance of an item as a standard or non-standard, to a certain extent is determined by the popularization of terms among the members of all the sectors of the society.

6.2.3 Standardization of Loan words

Any lexical item used in a language whose origin could be traced to some other language is called as a loan word. Standardization with reference to certain Tamil lexical items takes place in the natural way without the involvement of, or influence of, government or a body of individuals meant for standardizing them. Such lexical items may be loan words or loan translations. They became popular among the public due to reasons which could not be pinpointed.
For example words like,

1. elekṣan  'election'
2. poilis  'police'
3. tikket  'ticket'
4. train  'train'
5. calān  'chalan'
6. kār  'car'
7. koṛt  'court'
8. vein  'van'
9. re:diyo:  'radio'
10. stamp peippar  'stamp paper'
11. bas  'bus'
12. da:ktar  'doctor'
13. dra:ft  'draft'
14. draiv  'drive'

etc.,
and a host of other items became standardized not due to the influence of standardizing authorities. They got standardized because they were made popular by the foreign administrators in India. That is the reason why, even when the local government created equivalents in Tamil on the basis of language purism, etc., the created terms were not adopted by the public because the equivalent loan words are more frequent, simple and easy to adapt in actual practice.

As far as the technical terms are concerned, different individuals belonging to different domains of language use, have contributed to a greater extent in Tamil for the creation of transliterated loan forms and translated forms for the loan words. This has brought to light a situation for the existence of many Tamil terms as equivalents for bound morphemes and lexical items of loan technical terms. Moreover, the Tamil equivalents have not become popular, because they are restricted to specialized domains, and are used only by highly trained technical and medical people as well as scientists. Also, the need for writing science, technology, etc, in Tamil arose only recently. So, now the situation has been created for the standardization of lexical usages in technical writings, and many people and institutions are involved in this type of work.
6.2.4 Standardization of Technical Terms

An attempt is made here with reference to the standardization of lexical usages in specialised writings adopting the factors related to the standardization of language in general, that is, all the different factors proposed by various linguists and planners since the standardization of language use can be utilized in the standardization of technical terminologies also. Some of the factors such as,

Efficiency

Rationality

Commonalty

Flexible Stability

Intellectual Stabilization

Loyalty Condition

Pride Condition

Awareness Condition

Adequacy
Acceptability

Clarity

Economy

Beauty etc.,

are proposed by language planners for the selection, codification, elaboration of standard language varieties or usages. The same could be very well applied while proposing the establishment of a standard norm in technical terminologies. It is to be kept in mind here, that planning of technical terms viz-a-vis standardization of technical terms in Tamil will be definitely pluralistic. That is, one cannot conceive of a standard lexical item which could be homogeneously used in all the specialized domains. We may find examples of lexical items receiving technical status in one domain having different standardized meanings in different domains of use. For example, a term like aiyvaḻar has a standardized meaning, 'sanitary inspector' in Health Department, 'Inspector' in Police Department and 'researcher' in the Academic Domain. So, while standardizing the technical terms, the taxonomy of technical terms in which a particular term occurs has to be kept in mind before making any attempt to create or standardize the forms.
In the absence of conceiving a clear cut scientific taxonomy and the role of a technical term within the taxonomy, the effect of lexical creation will be problematic and lexical creation leads to the creation of several technical terms with no clear delimited meaning. Also, technical terms may show overlapping with reference to their meaning. So, one strategy that has to be followed is that even if the simple terms are not available, it is better to coin technical phrases, etc. to capture the meaning of the terminologies.

6.3 Technical Terms in Tamil

When we review technical terms available in Tamil (bound morphemes, words, compounds, etc.), we find a situation where a foreign technical term or suffix or compound has either no equivalence or one equivalence or many equivalence. Similarly for more than one loan technical term, we find only one term or more terms in Tamil.

1. Loan item  :  No equivalent item

2. One loan item  :  More than one equivalent Tamil items

3. One loan item  :  One Tamil item
4. More than one loan word : One Tamil item

5. More than one loan word : More than one Tamil item

6.3.1 1. Loan item : No equivalent item

1. chlorine
2. chromite
3. quartz : No
4. radiator
5. transistor

6.3.2 One loan item : One equivalent Tamil item

1. ammonia navacca:ram
2. angle ko:nam
3. axis accu
4. coal nilakkari
5. concrete karka:rai
6. friction
7. furnace
8. gas
9. hook
10. instructor
11. lease
12. liquid
13. pressure
14. vendor
15. weaving
16. will
17. wool

etc.

6.3.3 One Loan item : More than one Tamil item

1. ammeter

\[ \text{\textit{minno:\textasciitilde{t}\textasciitilde{t}a\textasciitilde{a}\textasciitilde{v}i}} \]

1. ammeter

\[ \text{\textit{minno:\textasciitilde{t}\textasciitilde{t}ama:\textasciitilde{n}i}} \]
2. amplifier

3. arc

4. arc furnace

5. arc lamp

6. collector

7. conductor

8. gauge
| 9. pillar       | tu:n           |
|               |               |
|               | ka:l           |
|               |               |
| 10. temple     | a:layam        |
|               |               |
|               | ko:yil         |
|               |               |
| 11. thickness  | tatippu        |
|               |               |
|               | kanam          |

6.3.4 More than one loan word: One equivalent Tamil word

| 1. cell        | min kalam      |
|               |               |
|               | battery        |
| 2. dry cell    | pa:ai minkalam |
|               |               |
|               | dry battery    |
| 3. frame       | cattam         |
|               |               |
|               | square         |
4. square wave  
catta alai

5. frame work  
catta ve:la

6. grain  
crystal  
patikam

7. grain structure  
patika amaippu

8. liquid crystal  
nirmap patikam

9. registration  
recording  
pativu ceytal

10. list  
role  
patiyal

6.3.5 One loan item : One equivalent Tamil item

Prefix

1. endo-  
aka-

2. hydro-  
nir-
3. iso-  
   cama-

4. tele-  
   tolai-

6.3.6 More than one loan item: One Tamil equivalent item

1. -ness  
   ∅

2. -ity  
   ∅

3. -ty  
   ∅

Examples

1. personality  
   a: lumai

2. stiffness  
   viraipputanmai

3. toughness  
   valimai

   etc.

6.3.7 One loan item: More than one equivalent Tamil item

1. Micro-  
   nun-
   nunniya-
   nunmai-
2. thermo-

Suffixes

1. -ation
2. -ation

Example

1. conservation
2. taxation

Examples

1. conservation
   pa:tuka:ppu
2. taxation
   varivitippu

-ation

Example

1. combination
cerikkai
2. declaration
arihkkai
6.4 Strategies for Standardization

6.4.1 Creation

The first phase of standardization of lexical items in Tamil involves the creation of terms in Tamil as equivalent to the technical terms of scientific subjects, because most of the scientific terms come to Tamil from the English source. Mostly scientific writings from the West form the model for the creation of scientific writings in Tamil. As far as the lexical creation is concerned, scientists working for the development of Tamil for science, adopted certain strategies. Borrowing technical terms and giving native graphemic shape to the items borrowed, translation of items with native Tamil words and phrases, creation of Tamil compounds as equivalents to borrowed terms, limiting or expanding the meaning of native words to suit foreign terms, creation of blend forms are some
of the common processes adopted by scholars working for the
development of Tamil for special purposes. The following
three points regarding lexical creations have been outlined
by Rama Sundaram (1986: 19-27). They are:

1. Terminology creation by Dr. Green

2. State of lexical creation before 1980 and after
   1980

3. What is expected to be done in future in the area
   of lexical creation?

Some of the examples representing the creation of
technical terminologies based on the various techniques are
presented below:

1. Nativised loan words

   (i) Nativised loan words showing variation in the
       graphemic form.

   Examples

   1. beṅku

   2. baṅk
3. baṅku
4. baṅki
5. vaṅki

2. Loan Translations

3. Loan Translations showing variation

Examples

1. ceyalaːlar, ceyalar
2. minsəːra vaːriyam, min vaːriyam
3. nuːl nilaiyam, nuːlakam
4. veːləːnmai, veːləːntolil

4. Loan blends

5. Loan blends showing variation

6. Native words semantically extended

7. Native words (with restricted meaning)

Radha Chellappan (1982) lists out certain common procedures
adopted by those scholars working on lexical creations. They are as follows:

1. Affixation

2. Modification of base forms

3. Compounding

4. Meaning based lexical creation

5. Use of conventional words like colloquial words, folk words, literary words, etc.

6. Transliteration

7. Using words having similar sound pattern as the loan word

8. Grammatical words

9. Domain words

10. Functional names

11. Lexical blends

etc.
6.4.2 Norm - based Selection

One of the important aspect of standardization is the selection of technical terms on the basis of the needs of the society. At present different types of selectional norms are employed as far as the selection of technical terms are concerned. The norms followed by the International Committee on Scientific and Technical Terms are often kept as a frame of reference in this regard. The International Committees of Technical Terms have advocated the non-alternation of technical terms representing names of scientists, international units, theories, concepts, etc.

A short term work group set up by the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, to lay down the principles of selecting vocabulary for standardization in Indian languages has characterized the following conditions meant for this purpose:

1. Pan Indian Communication
2. Precision in Meaning
3. Self Explanatory Words
4. Acceptable words known from state languages

and

5. English, Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic Sources.

According to the above conditions, the vocabulary which has to be selected for scientific purposes in the Indian setup should satisfy the Pan Indian Communication, should be precise in meaning, should be self explanatory, and should be from English or from common Indian languages.

Selection of technical terms also involves various strategies such as adoption of International English forms, allowance for abbreviation in local languages, allowance for making letters and figures through local languages, conceptual translations, adoption of criteria such as simplicity, precision, intelligibility, avoidance of purism, maintenance of Pan-Indian vocabulary, maintenance of indigenous scientific terms, maintenance of loans which gain currency and popularity, adoption of transliteration in local script, use of hybrid and blend forms if they are simple, utilizable and precise, avoidance of complex sandhi processes, which function as barriers for simplification, adoption and popularisation of historically old words, if they are sufficient, explanatory, etc.
Some planners adopt certain selectional strategies for the standardization of terms giving importance to the functional value of terms and their communicative efficiency. For instance, Benabdi (1986) advocates even the adoption of colloquialism along with phonological and semantic loans for lexical expansion with reference to planning in Magrib language. Communication based lexical selection and standardization involve consideration of economy, precision and appropriateness (Johnson and Sager, 1980).

6.5 Standardization of Terms

Standardization involves, as mentioned earlier, four important processes namely term creation, term selection, term elaboration and term popularization. While discussing about standardization, Karunakaran and Jeya (1989), list out certain illustrative examples representing the terms which get standardized on the basis of the conditions like appropriateness, adoptability, simplicity, uniformity, multiplicity, inter-disciplinary aspects, etc. The following examples illustrate the above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available forms</th>
<th>Standard forms</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. nu:laṭaivu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. nu:laṭṭavanai</td>
<td>nu:laṭaivu 'bibliography'</td>
<td>appropriateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. nu:lo:ti</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. nu:1 pattiyal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. inaic ceyalar 0 inai
        0 'joint' adoptability
ku:ttu ceyalar 0 kuttu

3. a. anjal alavalakam
    anjalakam 'post office' simplicity
      anjalakam

    b. mintatai
      mintatai 'power cut' simplicity
minca:rattatai

    c. minsara va:riyam
      minva:riyam 'electricity simplicity
      minva:riyam board'

4. ko:nam
    ko:nam 'angle' uniformity

5. etiri
    etiri
    etirppu
    atakki
    olippu
    pakai
    ta:ta
    muri
    niskki
    olippu 'anti' multiplicity
    pakai
    ta:ta
    muri
    niskki
In the same way one could intuitively and in consultation with the items which are in use in the written as well as in the spoken media, identify the standardized lexical items. All the parameters proposed by various linguists can be taken into account so as to identify the standardized forms in Tamil in the domain of administration, education and mass media.

6.5.1 Pluralistic Approach

While standardizing lexical usages, different aspects of lexical items can be given due attention and the standardization process may be made to show variation. Standardization of the graphological forms of lexical items, standardization of meaning of the lexical items, are some of the types of standardization which could be brought under the purview of lexical standardization. Since standardization is the pluralistic and multi-disciplinary endeavour, one has to take into account the spoken and written media, the different domains for which the lexical standardization is expected and the various communicative aspects followed in different domains. The genius and structural norms of language etc., should be brought together in an integrated way so as to make standardization a meaningful activity.
Choosing a uniform standardization parameter is a futile attempt and assigning a particular institution for bringing out the standardization, is tedious with reference to the Tamil set up. However, the Government of Tamilnadu, and some private agencies in Tamilnadu have made attempts to make certain items standard at least in the domains of administration, education, etc. The compilation of Tamil Aatciccol Akaraatti is an outcome of such an attempt. It is to be mentioned here that since the people who are drawn and consulted for the preparation of such compilations probably, are made to do so, for the first time and hence they could not give deeper thinking over the translations of foreign vocabulary items related to administration etc. because of the lack of practical experience. As far as the scientific terminologies are concerned, a number of scientists who have an in-depth knowledge in science and who have the desire to write science in Tamil should come together and discuss the problem of getting lexical equivalence in Tamil. The major principle which has to be kept in mind is uniformity in translation which has not been maintained in the compiled glossaries. No doubt, a particular foreign lexical item may have different meanings with reference to different domains, and normally different Tamil equivalents are expected and needed to express them. But even in one and the same domain, one and the same loan item is
translated in different ways, and it causes confusion to
the readers who read and practice such scientific and techno-
logical materials in Tamil.

One proposal for the maintenance of uniformity in trans-
lation, is as far as the scientific and technological domains
are concerned, is to list out all the related technical terms
belonging to sub-domains of technology in one place and then
attempting the creation of lexical equivalence. Since this
method has not been followed uniformly by those who are involved
in the creation of scientific lexical items in Tamil, for one
and the same loan term several individual coinages are made.
Moreover the compilers who are appointed by the Government for
the creation of technical terms in Tamil are not always scientists.
A situation is found where what is given as lexical equivalent
to a foreign technical term is not acceptable to the language
users and are not used also even in technical writings.

So, the coinage of technical terms for loan words if not
done appropriately on the basis of meaning and form, then they
will appear to be unintelligible, inappropriate and beyond use.

6.5.2 Standardization and International Organisations

Standardization process is very much associated with the
functional use of items and the intelligibility of items among the common public. Popularization of lexical items is one of the major aspects involved in the process of standardization. Knowingly or unknowingly certain lexical items both in the spoken and written varieties enter into the mass media, and they become popular among the masses. Such forms naturally achieve popularity and thereby they are naturally standardized. The other way of standardization is planning, preparation and popularisation of need-based terms through the intervention of agencies like government, private institutions, voluntary organisations or some groups of individuals, etc. This way of standardizing lexical standardization is the unnatural or the instigation standardization. Many of the instigated standardization methods will not achieve currency if they are to satisfy the needs of the users—Tamil speakers who involve in speaking and writing. While looking at the terminologies historically, we could find that some firm points have become thoroughly popular and some others highly popular. A study is required to identify the norm or attitude of terms that are used as point of reference for the acceptance or rejection of terms. Theoretically we could say that if an item satisfies the criteria like simplicity, semantic appropriateness, structural appropriateness, etc., then the possibility of that item getting
standardized is more. If any one of the factors before mentioned is not taken note of, it may lead to rejection of the concerned item. Users' attitude is an important factor which governs the selection of the term as a standard one.