1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Lexical items of languages were a constant source of inspiration for analysis and a source of wonder from the days people started working on languages. The Greek philosophers pondered over the question whether the lexical items reflect analogy or analogy. From the days of Greek tradition, various philosophers and grammarians have directed their attention towards the study of words. Medieval grammarians while continuing the Greco-Roman tradition of classifying words of languages on the basis of logic and grammar, brought out new facets in the classification of words by bringing out types of words as categormatic words, syncategormatic words and universal words. The tradition of analysing words and identifying new parameters for the classification of words continue till to-day by lexicographers, philosophers, grammarians, scientists, logicians and others.

Philosophers have often pointed out that words are magical entities, because they create the same type of psychological state as magical objects and concepts create in the mind of
men. For example, the word 'ghost' creates fear in the mind of men even in the absence of the test verifying the relevance of the question regarding the existence of the ghost.

Philosophers like Wittgenstein (1953) have pointed out that words of natural language are elusive, vague and ambiguous and so they are not useful for philosophical enquiry. He proposed word games to identify the exact meaning of the words of natural languages. It is the dissatisfaction the philosophers had over the natural language words that led the Western philosophers to the creation of flawless language for logical and philosophical purpose, and thereby symbolic logic came into existence.

Since the lexical items of a language are creations for the reflection of the individual and social self of a community, they create conflicting situation among the people through conflicting attitudes and beliefs. Some people inclined to say that words of a language are one of the major features for creating social problems among the people belonging to different societies. General semanticists classify words on the basis of their affective tendency as 'snarl' words, 'purr'
words and natural words. All the human psychic problems are partly due to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the words others utter.

Lexical items receive different kinds of usages depending upon the individuals who use them, the purpose for which they are used, etc. It is often said that even style is also determined by appropriate selection and usages of lexical items concerned. This being the reason, advertisers give much care in the selection of vocabulary items while they advertise their products. In advertisements words play an important role in bringing the customers to hypnotic trance and thereby make the customers to go beyond the level of using their reasoning power.

With reference to the technical vocabulary items which are representatives of scientific information, they are expected to be precise, non-vague and unambiguous. Then only their use could be perfect and precise. But when one looks at the lexical items that are created for the representation of scientific information, it is felt that constant modification is needed as science advances and scientific concepts become delicate. The present research study is oriented
towards the goal of identifying the possibilities and the problems related to the lexical usages and the standardization and planning of lexical usages in technical domains.

1.1.1 Planning

Planning refers to the utilization of the resources in a consciously controlled manner. Social planning is an example of decision making behaviour normally attributed in intelligent, individual action for problem solving. Language which is an inexhaustible resource for human development can also be taken into account for planning. The logic of language planning is dictated by the recognition of language as a societal resource. The importance of this resource is due to the communicational and identific values attached by the community to one or more languages (Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1975: 195-196).

In planning a language, a decision on the selection of a language or a variety of language is made. However, a decision on the selection of a norm for a community or a society is likely to be irrational unless consideration is
given to the functional capacity of the norm that is selected to the need for accompanying linguistic guides and to the probabilities of acceptance. Similarly vocabulary extension is hardly meaningful unless consideration is given to the rules of the language (norm) for which it is intended, as well as to the mode of the presentation and to the probabilities of acceptance in the speech community. Standardization of vocabulary, one of the three important aspects of language planning as per the model proposed by Ferguson (1968), is the subject matter of study.

Standardization is the process of acceptance of one variety of a language throughout the speech community as a supra-dialectal norm. A complete understanding of the principles of standardization makes it possible for us to apply the concepts to the cases of orthographical and terminological standardization. Standardization efforts could be directed towards a speech variety in its entirety or towards some aspects of a variety as in the case of terminological standardization. As standardization is repeatedly applied to language, the speech community acquires a language system displaying successively less linguistic differentiation.
1.2 Aims and Objectives

This study aims at the collection of the various lexical items from different domains of language use in the Tamil situation and apply the sociolinguistic principles of standardization to standardize the Tamil lexical usages. The aim of this study could be listed as follows:

1. Exposing the state of art in lexical usages in general
2. Presenting a sociolinguistic description of lexical usages
3. Reviewing the processes of language standardization in general and lexical standardization in particular
4. Assessing the lexical usages of Tamil language
5. Evolving and testing a model of standardization of lexical usages in Tamil
6. Evaluating the process of on-going lexical standardization in Tamil
7. Finding out the direction of lexical standardization
in Tamil, in the present day context and

and 8. Differentiating the on-going process of lexical standardization in Tamil in the native words and in the loan items.

1.3 Scope of the study

This study concentrates upon the process of lexical standardization in various domains of language use, such as

1. Administration

2. Education

3. Mass media

3.1 Radio

3.2 Television

3.3 News Papers

3.4 Magazines


The lexical usages found in the above areas of language use irrespective of their origin whether they are native to
Tamil or non-native have been taken up for this study.

This study has been extended to both the varieties of Tamil, namely, spoken and written. The diglossic situation in Tamil presents a peculiar situation in language use, wherein we find more English loan words being used in the spoken variety and Tamil literary words used in the written variety.

The present study has endeavoured to find out the percentage of various lexical items belonging to different domains which are known to the speakers of Tamil, classified into five categories as common people, school teachers, non-teaching staff, research scholars and lecturers. Moreover, a study of the major factors and dimensions which are involved in the process of standardization of Tamil lexical usages has also been brought under the scope of the present analysis.

Since the study is entitled lexical standardization in Tamil, syntactic and other dimensions of standardization have not been brought under the scope of the present study.

1.4 Methodology Used

The methodology used in this study pertains to sociolinguistics as well as to general linguistics and structu-
ralism. A large amount of data, namely, lexical usages in different domains have been collected from different sources, and their characteristics with reference to standardization have been analysed. Using the principles of statistics and sampling an estimate of the percentage of standardized terms in different domains of language use has been done. For this purpose, sampling techniques and statistical methods have been employed.

Before beginning the actual work of assessing the process of standardization, the planner has to have a certain amount of information about the situation in which the plan is to be effected. He/she must investigate the existing setting, to ascertain the nature of the problems. So, with a view to know the nature of constraints, tendencies and rationale of lexical standardization in Tamil, the social, occupational, economic, educational levels of the speakers were also taken into consideration. Moreover, these parameters were not taken in isolation, but they were taken in combination. As these parameters serve as a tool for our analysis they have been handled with utmost care. The informants were selected on the basis of the stratified purposive sampling and data were elicited from the selected informants.
1.4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected from different domains like,

1. Administrative glossary with supplements (published by the Tamil Development Directorate, Madras)

2. Educational domain

3. Mass media including radio, television, newspapers and magazines

and 4. Common usages (non-technical)

All the lexical usages collected from these sources were subjected to analysis in this study. The collected data were first processed as native vs non-native usages. After this, the native words were assessed for identifying the quantum of standardization which they have undergone. In the same way, the non-native words were also subjected to analysis after processing them as loan adaptations, loan-translations and shifts. The process of affixation in the lexicalization has also been studied. These analyses have
been done at the macro level. In the micro level the following studies have been carried out with a view to propose a model for evolving a standardization process in lexical usages, and for evaluating the on-going process of lexical standardization in Tamil.

Data were collected for the micro level analysis from informants who were selected on the basis of stratified purposive sampling with the help of interview schedules prepared for this purpose. The interview schedules were used in the collection of data in addition to the social and other background data of the informants. The number of informants selected for this study was twenty and they belong to different social and occupational categories. The interview schedule consists of twenty five words from each of the four domains, namely, 1. administration 2. education 3. mass media and 4. common usage (non-technical).

Totally there were one hundred lexical items in the interview schedule, and the informants were asked to identify the following characteristics:

1. a known word
2. an unknown word

and 3. the language variety or varieties in which the word is used.

These details were collected from all the informants and the data thus collected were processed and analysed. Similarly, another study aiming at assessing the selectional factors for standardization was conducted. In this part ten words belonging to different domains were listed along with their variant forms. The maximum number of variants exhibited by a single lexical entry in this list was seven, and the minimum two. The informants were asked to scrutinize all these lexical entries, and to identify the words which they think are standardized along with the factors which in their opinion have contributed for the standardization of those usages.

The results of these studies have been master-tabled with a view to get an overall picture of the nature and quantum of lexical standardization in Tamil. By applying the principles of statistics, the following items have been
studied with the help of the data collected for this study.

1. The percentage of lexical items in all the four domains known to all the five categories of subjects selected for the study, namely, 1. common people, 2. school teachers, 3. non-teaching staff, 4. research scholars and 5. lecturers.

2. A comparative statement of the percentage of known lexical items among the subjects of this study.

3. A domain-wise percentage of lexical items which are known and unknown to the subjects has also been calculated.

4. The quantum of standardization in the written and spoken Tamil lexical usages in all the four domains has been elicited, and the percentage has been compared in order to have an overall idea about the nature of standardization.

The statistical results of the analysis have been presented in the form of Bar and Line diagrams along with the respective charts and tables.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Standardization of lexical usages assumes greater signi-
ficence in the present day sociolinguistic context in order to achieve high percentage of communication and spread of message. Each and every society is involved in widening, expanding and enriching the domains of language use in order to make their language or language varieties more efficient to carry out the various social functions expected of it. When lexical enrichment takes place in different domains of language use, then there arises the problem of variation. Variation in lexical usage necessitates standardization of the usages in order to have a normal and efficient mechanism of communication. In this respect, this study has made a sincere attempt to collect all the lexical usages in Tamil and to assess the extent to which standardization has taken place in them. This helps a language user as well as a language planner to have a clear cut idea about the nature of the on-going process of standardization in different domains.

The classification of lexical usages into four major domains as 1. administration, 2. education, 3. mass media and 4. common usage has helped the researcher to identify the exact area where maximum standardization has taken place and the place where minimum standardization has taken place.
This serves as a feedback to the language planners. The particular domain to which more attention has to be focussed in the process of standardization could be identified with the help of this type of analysis.

Moreover, of the two varieties of Tamil, namely, the spoken variety and the written variety, the particular variety which contains more number of standardized lexical items could also be assessed using the results of this study. This is significant from the point of view of the diglossic situation that exists in the Tamil language.

This study gains significance in the context of the plentitude of loan usages in Tamil. In Tamil we find a number of loan lexical items, the major donors being English, Sanskrit, Perso-Arabic, etc. The lexical usages in Tamil have been bi-furcated as native items and non-native items, and the nature of standardization process taking place in these words have been studied.

The standardization model that could be most appropriately used in the Tamil context has also been attempted in this study. The standardization techniques and the evaluation
techniques proposed in this study could serve very well as a model for future studies in this type of research.

In a multilingual country where too much of emotions and sentiments are attached to language and language development, any lacuna in the process of standardization may sever language development drastically. A study of this nature, therefore, serves as a tool for attaining standardization without much problems.

1.6 Plan of the Study

The present study has been reported in eight chapters including the introduction and conclusion. The bibliographical data and the sample interview schedule are added at the end of the dissertation. The plan of the eight chapters is as follows:

1.6.1 Introduction

In the introductory chapter, a general introduction about the lexical usage, standardization, etc, are discussed along with the aim, scope, significance of the present study.
Also a chapterwise description is given in a miniature form.

1.6.2 Language Use in Tamil

In this chapter, general information regarding the use of Tamil language is given. The role of borrowed items in enriching the usage of lexical items in Tamil has been described. The diglossic nature of Tamil, the official policy related to Tamil use, and the use of Tamil language in various domains like education, mass media, etc. have been discussed briefly.

1.6.3 Lexical Usages in Tamil

This chapter exposes in first part the general use of the vocabulary items. An attempt has also been made to find out the number of lexical patterns and sets that are found in use. The lexical items which are in use were also classified on the basis of the parameter native : borrowed.

1.6.4 Sociolinguistic Study of Lexical Usages

This chapter introduces the sociolinguistic study of lexical usages in general from the historical perspective and
tries to classify the vocabulary items in Tamil in popular use, on the basis of geographical, social and situational parameters proposed by modern sociolinguists.

1.6.5 Language Standardization in general and Lexical Standardization in particular

This chapter gives general information about language planning as a supra-level activity, and then goes on to expose all the general aspects related to standardization of language and lexical items such as standardization principles, parameters, people who proposed standardization, etc.

1.6.6 Standardization of Lexical Usages

This chapter looks at standardization from the broader perspective and gives an account of lexical creation, lexical selection and lexical standardization, taking into account the lexical items, both native and borrowed, drawn from various technical domains of language use. It also gives an account of the attempts made in Tamil for the standardization of lexical items and the various agencies involved in it.
1.5.7 Model Testing of Standardization of Lexical Items

In this chapter, the aim, method, data, analysis, findings, etc. which are related to the two tests which were administered in order to find out the standardized and being standardized lexical items drawn from the four domains of language use, and the factors assuming primary status as parameters of standardization are discussed.

1.6.8 Conclusion

This chapter summarises the model presented for testing the standardization of lexical items and gives suggestions for the standardization of Tamil lexical items.