

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

In Malaysia, the Indian population forms about 10 percent of the total population. Among them, about 90 percent speaks the Tamil Language. Even though most of them are the native speakers, some non Tamil speakers also use the language in their everyday life. The Tamil Language has the written and the spoken form. As for the written form they learn this language either in National Type Tamil Schools or in National Schools at primary level. In National Type Tamil Schools the Tamil Language forms the medium of instruction while in the National Schools Tamil is taught as the People's Own Language (POL) classes.

According to the statistic from the Ministry of Education in the year 1998, there are 530 National Type Tamil Schools in Malaysia. The total enrolment of students comes to 97191. The total number of students taking Tamil as POL in National Schools is 10365 and among them 9868 are the Indian students.

After the primary education the Tamil Language is only taught as POL from Remove to Form Five in secondary schools. In secondary level the students sit for Lower Secondary Examination or 'Penilaian Menengah Rendah' (PMR) and Malaysian Certificate of Education or 'Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia' (SPM). After form five the students could sit for the Tamil language at Higher School Certificate of Education or 'Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia' (STPM). In most cases the students learn the Tamil language on their own.

The students could also take Tamil at university level especially at University of Malaya. Tamil language is also taught at the Teacher Training Colleges which cater teachers for the National Type Tamil Schools.

Besides this, the mass media, especially the printed form, also plays an important role in teaching the language. Among them the daily newspapers play the major role. There are three newspapers in Tamil, namely The Tamil Ne:san, Malaysia Nanpan and Tina Muracu. Although the society may inadvertently improve its language by reading these papers it is found that numerous errors occur in the newspapers. The readers who constantly come across the grammatical errors may feel that it is the correct form of the language.

As such, studies in error analysis in Tamil newspapers would be of a great help to the editors to know and rectify the areas in which the errors are committed. A study of the errors will indicate the areas in which the errors frequently occur. Due to the lack of proper analysis and guidance and the interference of other factors such as the difference between spoken and written Tamil, the interference of other languages, native speakers make numerous types of errors in their written Tamil. The most recurrent errors are the exclusion and inclusion of Junction features at wrong places, the use of wrong words, spelling mistakes and the use of wrong sentence structures.

If the errors are not rectified the standard of Tamil may be affected further. The future generation may tend to use this form of the language as the correct form.

## **1.2 Aims and Purpose of the Study**

This study attempts to identify and classify the types of phonological and morphological errors committed by the three Tamil dailies in Malaysia namely The Tamil Ne:san, Malaysia Nanpan and Tina Muracu.

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- i) To identify systematic and performative errors committed by the three Tamil dailies.
- ii) To identify the morphological errors committed by the three Tamil dailies.
- iii) To classify the errors in different categories and to obtain the frequencies for each category.
- iv) To find out about how this errors could happen.
- v) To suggest remedial measures for the most recurrent type of errors.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The newspapers play an important role as they are a source of extra reading. Besides informal education, the newspapers and magazines form an important source of information, entertainment, leisure and language building. Thus, the language that is used by the newspapers must be of standard and error free.

#### **1.4 Background of the Study**

Tamil is the medium of instruction in National Type Tamil Schools. Besides Malay Language (Bahasa Malaysia) and English other subjects, such as Mathematics, Science, Physical and Health Education, Music, 'Alam dan Manusia' and others are all taught in Tamil Language. There are also some National Type Tamil Schools that teaches other subjects such as Physical Education and Art using the Malay Language. In National Schools, Tamil is only taught from the year three provided there are more than 15 students in that particular year and parents of the students request for the class to be conducted. The time allocation given for teaching this language is only 120 minutes per week and in most schools it is taught after normal school hours.

In the secondary schools, more emphasis is given to the acquiring of proficiency in the Malay and English Languages. Thus during the secondary education, students from both National Type Primary Tamil Schools and National Schools are only able to take the Tamil Language in the POL classes after normal school hours. The time allocation given is also 120 minutes per week.

## **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

This study will explore only three of the National Tamil Newspapers, namely The Tamil Ne:san, Malaysia Nanpan and Tina Muracu. As such the sample would not represent all the Tamil Newspapers that are published weekly or monthly. These three papers were deliberately chosen as the majority of the Tamil readers read them everyday.

The pilot study carried out by the investigator shows that these newspapers do commit numerous errors. It is found that all the three newspapers taken for the study makes two types of errors, namely the systematic errors and the performance errors. Even though the performance errors could not be considered as an error, the investigator finds that it has an effect on the readers, especially on those who use the newspapers to learn the language.

It is beyond the scope of the investigator to analyze all the errors. As such not all grammatical errors will be analyzed. Only important and frequent errors will be identified and analyzed. It should be noted that the newspapers used for the study were explored for the duration of one month only and the articles selected were taken at a random. Thus the investigator only discusses the errors that were found in these articles. There may be other types of errors committed by the newspapers but the investigator have not

analyzed them as they were not found at the articles selected.