

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0. Introduction

Both the homepage and emails of the website were analysed to answer the research questions. As explained in Chapter 2, in order to answer research question 1, an analysis of the homepage and emails in general was carried out. Research Question 2 was answered by analysing only the homepage. To answer research question 3, an analysis of the sentences found in the selected emails which had a combination of both English and Tamil was carried out.

4.1 Research Question 1 - How much English was used in this website in a month?

To ascertain how much English was used in Tamil.Net, a total word count of the homepage was made. The total number of words in the homepage was 758 words. Out of these, 14 or 1.8% were addresses. It must be stressed that these web addresses are predetermined by domains which are responsible for links and addresses on the Internet. Addresses and links

are uniform in Internet and until now, most addresses are still in English. These addresses are known as Uniform Resource Locators (URL). Using URLs is not out of choice but is determined by domain settings which are mostly in English. Since currently, English dominates the URL domains, the webmaster and the others involved in producing this website had to use the available English URLs.

The 14 URL addresses found in the homepage were as follows :

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. webmaster@tamil.net | 7. bala@tamil.net (3 times) |
| 2. info@tamil.net | 8. email@tamil |
| 3. tamil.subscribe@tamil.net | 9. www.tamil.net/projectmadurai |
| 4. muthu@tamil.net | 10. www.murasu.com (2 times) |
| 5. http://www.apic.net/news | 11. anjal20@murasu.com |
| 6. http://www.tamil.net/downloads | |

Total : 14 addresses

It was observed that almost all these addresses except one (<http://www.apic.net/news>) were initiated by the Tamil.Net webmaster. www.murasu.com links to the Tamil software required to read fonts in the Tamil script and muthu@tamil.net is one of the people responsible for the software. To get access to the Tamil font software, an understanding of English is required to read and understand the address before clicking to obtain the Tamil font software.

Holmes (2001) states that in the domain of administration where the setting is official and serious and the topic is something important, the language choice would be the official variety. Similarly, the producer of text of the homepage of Tamil.Net had a serious goal which was to attract as many participants to the website as possible. This was shown in the many ways as was seen by the messages to join the Tamil cybercommunity such as '*Join us*', '*Contact Us*', '*Join the Tamil community*'. Tamil.Net being in a global technology setting where currently English dominates the Internet as was shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.3, the producer of text had used English in the homepage.

b. Tamil words

In contrast, there were only 18 or 2.4% Tamil words in the homepage. Words that were repeated were counted individually as separate lexical items. Out of these, 17 were transliterated words, meaning Tamil words in roman script. Only one was in the Tamil script. The only Tamil script word used was '*Thamizh Inaiyam*' meaning 'Tamil Internet'.

From the word count, it can be concluded that there were 95.8% English words, 1.8% web addresses in English and 2.4% Tamil words in the homepage. In total, 97.6% of the homepage was in English and only 2.4% in Tamil. This indicates that, for the purpose of providing information, English dominates the homepage of Tamil.Net.

4.1.2. Emails

There were a total of 191 emails in the chosen month of November, 2001. Out of these, 97 or 50% emails were in Tamil. 57 or 30% emails were in English and 37 or 20% emails had both English and Tamil in the contents , addresses and subject. These 37 emails which had both the languages will be referred to as mixed emails.

17.5% of the 50% English emails were excerpts of conferences, news and extracts from journal articles pertaining to the Indian culture, temples and religion, with at least 7% solely on religion. These texts could have been just forwarded or even copied and pasted from an outside source. The participants had felt a need to share discussions on culture and religion from outside source with the others in the group. There was one email which was an email accidently reached site. The results of the word count of the homepage and the emails in general are shown in Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1 and 4.2 in the next page.

Table 4.1.

Language Used in the Tamil.Net

Categories	Total number	Percentage
Homepage		
Addresses (URL's in English)	14	1.8%
Tamil words	18	2.4%
English words	726	95.8%
	758 words	100%
Emails		
Tamil emails	97	50%
English emails	57	30%
Mixed emails	37	20%
	191 emails	100%

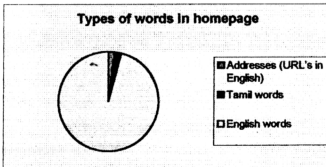


Figure 4.1. : Types of words in the homepage

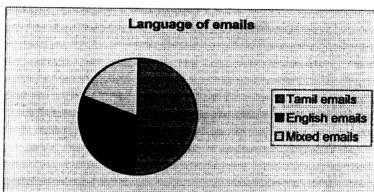


Figure 4.2. : Language of emails for the month of November 2001

Referring to Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1 and 4.2, it can be seen that 97.6% of the total content in the homepage and 50% of the emails in the chosen month of November 2001 were in English. In the Internet setting, the homepage being the front page of a website serves as an index to other links. Therefore, it seems inevitable that, to access the website and to obtain information and link to other Tamil websites, English remains as the main tool language.

4.2. Research Question 2 : What are the types of English and Tamil words used?

To understand the types of English and Tamil words used in the homepage, the context of the situation and the context of culture of Tamil.Net had to be considered. The English used was described according

to the components described by Hymes (1967). As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hymes attributes communication to be a factor of the setting of the communicative event, the relationship among the participants, and the message form and contents. The setting of the homepage of Tamil.Net, the relationship between the producer and the participants of Tamil.Net and the actual message form and contents were analysed to study the English used. Since only 2.37% of the homepage consisted of Tamil words, these words were categorised and the reasons for their usage analysed.

4.2.1. English used in the homepage

The English used was analysed by looking into the setting of Tamil.Net, the relationship between the producer of text and the recipients and the message form and contents. According to Hymes (1977), focus on settings entails all that is considered contextual. Focus on the addressor or sender entails such types of functions as identification of the source and expression of attitude towards the event as a whole. Focus of messages entails such functions involved in the writing systems and the identity of the element of the code used in conversation.

a. Setting

Many countries, including Malaysia, have begun to stress the importance of learning English as it is the language of ICT (*The Star*, 2001).

To keep pace with the technological rapid change, the language of this technological change, which is English, has to be learnt. As pointed out by Crystal (1997), English is not the most widely used language, but it is the global language. The Internet, being a global setting uses mainly English. With such a setting, the producer of the text was aware that he is in contact with the 'present but absent' recipient who naturally has to understand the English language to be able to log on to Internet in the first place. Not only does English have to be understood, but the properties of technology texts have to be understood as well.

In Tamil.Net, related topics are linked together and given a tag in English similar to other websites. Some of these tags link to websites solely in the Tamil Language. These tagged links are placed on the left margin of the homepage and are easily recognized. Any tags to the left margin of the homepage serve as links and are understood by the users whether the language used is understood or not. These tags consist of mainly one or two English words such as 'Tamil Tech. Notes' and 'Anjal FAQ', but explicitly explaining the information contained within. Since the intended audience were all users of Internet who understood the rules of writing and communicating on the Internet, the producer had used English words in the tag links with the assumption that the recipients have shared knowledge of the production, page layout and contractions in language used. English in this case, was the shared language of knowledge for naming, identifying and describing as was found by Anie Attan (1998).

Tags to the left margin of the homepage are as follows (refer to Appendix 1) :

Free Homepages	Tamil People	IATR
Tamil List	Learn Tamil	KUYIL magazine
Free Software	Tamil Tech. Notes	
Anjal FAQ	Astrology	
Contact Us	Tamil.net FAQ	

These tags can be regarded as a form of register on the Internet where the vocabulary used such as IATR, FAQ, KUYIL are recognized by the users even if the proficiency in English is minimal. The settings of Tamil.Net being on the Internet has influenced the language use and choice on the Internet and in this case the language chosen was English.

b. Relationship between producer and recipient

The style of text production in the homepage reflects an informal one, suggesting an informal, easy-going relationship and an understanding between the producer of text and the recipients. There are many personal statements in the homepage indicating an informal speech and a casual style. As stated by Romaine (1994), style is related to register and the relationship of the participants and the social context.

Interactions between the producer of the text and the recipient in Tamil.Net give the impression that they know each other although the

participants come from various parts of the world. Even if they do not know each other, they are requested to get to know the identity of the participants. In this way, the speakers will know to whom they are addressing. It gives the impression that this group is an informal one with a certain degree of intimacy between participants. Names are mentioned as if they are present together in a virtual world. If the participants do not know the others in the group, they are requested to see the pictures of these people clearly denoting that these are important people in the running of this website and discussion forum, for example : *Wanna see a picture of Bala?*. Some characters are also described. Desikan was described as a very decent person from Madras and that he is about to get married. Aravindan was described as being witty with the Madras language.

The interaction between the producer and the participants of the Tamil.Net was similar to a 'typical' family interaction as described by Holmes (2001). The function of goal of the producer of text is exclusively effective and it explains the language used which transmits feelings of intimacy and friendship. The producer of text had realised the need to make the participants feel like part of a family so that they will continue using the website and provide support to the producer of text. Therefore, it was necessary to use language where all the participants feel comfortable. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the assumption that the participants are proficient in English and that they may not all know the Tamil script, since they come

from various parts of the world where Tamil is a minority language, had made English the dominant language in this homepage.

Some examples in the homepage referring to personal statements to show that it is similar to a family interaction are as follows (refer to Appendix 1) :

<i>Led by Kalyanasundram in Lausanne</i>	<i>US Aravindan is back</i>
<i>Kumar Mallikarjunan in Atlanta</i>	<i>Wanna see a picture of Bala?</i>
<i>Mr. Ganeson wrote – the recipients should know who this person is.</i>	
<i>Ramani from somewhere down South</i>	<i>Nagu from Bangalore</i>
<i>Palani is feverishly plugging in reports</i>	<i>Kannan from Germany</i>
<i>Nagu is also putting together an online Tamil dictionary</i>	<i>Anil Kumar Candin</i>
<i>Send an email to Bala Pillai or Muthu Nedumaran</i>	
<i>See pictures of Muthu, Palani, Dr Kalyan, V.T. Arasu and Sujatha</i>	
<i>Have you checked out Desikan's homepage?</i>	

Using Hymes (1977) explanation, focus on the addressor or the producer of text of the Tamil.Net reveals that the producer of text had used persuasion, appeal tactics and direction to persuade the participants to be part of Tamil.Net.

c. Message form and content

How the information is arranged, chunked and sequenced are important aspects of communication especially on the Internet because technology texts have inherent properties understood by the users as

mentioned by Shortis (2001) in Chapter 2. To communicate to users and attract their attention, short but attractive sentences have been used like how it is in most homepages. Some of the sentences are incomplete and consist of mostly relative clauses. The main clause is missing and the sentences start with a conjunction such as '*And Free Email@tamil*', '*And so is chat in Tamil*', '*Contact Us*'. Such simple sentences and clauses although in English are easily understood by the participants even if the proficiency of English is moderate.

The way of communicating in the homepage seems to be more in the imperative mood supporting Ng's (2000) observation that the message form in the homepage is mainly used for requesting and informing. There are a number of questions followed by answers, as if the recipient and organiser of text are having a face-to-face communication. '*What's happening at tamil dot net?*' is followed by a two-paragraph explanation to answer the question. This question is repeated and there is an emphasis on the answer. '*What's happening at Thamizh Inaiyam or tamil dot net you ask.*' It is as if the speakers are facing each other and one cannot believe that question is asked. '*you ask*' is a question answering a question. Bala Pillai, also known as Bala, the founder of this website writes with authority asking, insisting, and requesting the participants to join in the Tamil cybercommunity. It is assumed that the participant is willing to read or listen further by giving hints that '*Project Madurai is a must*', similar to an emphasis

A lot of attention is given to make the homepage seem like it is a spoken text. This could be because the contents of the text are directed towards the recipient which explains the tendency of the text to follow closely the spoken language. The overall text presentation seems like a speech. Hymes (1997) states that the focus on message form entails such functions as proofread, mimicry, poetic and stylistic conversation. Proof of how good this website is emphasised by bringing in excerpts of what Mr. Ganeson wrote, which is in the spoken language. Within the excerpt of Mr. Ganeson, no importance was given to capitalizations and spelling. 'I' was sometimes spelt as 'i', and spelling of words was according to pronunciation such as 'previleged', 'unaccesseble'. These features were pointed out by Lewin (2002) in Chapter 2 and likewise, the homepage of Tamil.Net had the distinctive features of computer-mediated communication.

There are assumptions and abbreviations found in the text of the homepage indicating that the message form is understood by the participants. An outsider to this website might not be able to grasp the meaning immediately. Abbreviations such as IATR, FAQ, Tech. Notes, and C&L are assumed to be understood by all users. Similarly, 'IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT. Homepage is now fully OPERATIONAL' implies that the users of the website knew it was non-operational some time earlier due to technical problems.

It can be concluded that the words used in the homepage resemble technology texts with properties of Internet understood by participants. Technical topics are firmly associated with a particular code and the topic itself can trigger a switch to the appropriate code (Holmes, 2001, 37). Holmes (2001) also states that for many bilinguals, certain kinds of referential contents are more appropriately or more easily expressed in one language than the other language. Users of the Internet from the global setting have shared knowledge of the Internet setting and know the vocabulary of Internet which is mainly in English. Such technology texts and the Internet setting had triggered the producer of Tamil.Net to switch to English similar to the observation by Holmes.

4.2..2. Tamil words used in the homepage.

Only 18 Tamil words were used in the midst of a mainly English technology text. Some of these words such as 'Chennai-ite', 'witty with his Madras *bashai*' and 'your cup of *rasam*', were used just to serve as an ethnic identity marker. As mentioned in Holmes (2001), ethnic identity markers are relevant to a shared ethnic background and for a future relationship. Holmes also states that even speakers who are not very proficient in a second language may use brief phrases and words to be part of the group.

Tamil.Net can be compared to a 'typical' family interaction as was observed earlier in the relationship between the producer and participants of Tamil.Net. In such situations, Holmes (2001) describes that the language choice can shift to the mother tongue despite discussions being in another language. Since English dominates the homepage, to show shared ethnicity and to signal group membership, the producer of Tamil.Net had used Tamil words mainly for affective purposes. The Tamil words used in the homepage can be categorised as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2.

The Tamil Words Used in the Homepage

Categories	Words	Part of Speech
Terms relating to Internet	தமிழ் இணையம் meaning 'Tamil Internet'	Noun
	Thamizh Innaiyam 4x	Noun
	Anjal 5x	Noun
	Akaram	Noun
Fashion or coined words	Chennai-ite	
	Madurai Thittam	Noun
	Bashai	Noun
Tamil Magazines	Kuyil	Noun
	Vikatan	Noun
Indian Food	Rasam	Noun
Expression of belonging	Anbudan	

16 words out of a total of 18 words belong to the noun category. 'Anbudan' is a form of address meaning 'with love' which is usually used at the end of a letter or email. The only word that appeared like an adjective was actually used as a noun + suffix 'ite'. Chennai actually refers to what was earlier known as Madras and when the suffix 'ite' is added, it means someone from Madras. Treffers-Daller (1994) states that nouns are easily borrowed from other languages because nouns form part of a structured paradigm whereby the word order in sentences is not affected by the lexical borrowing. For instance, if the Tamil words in the sentence, 'Project Madurai is *Thamizh Innaiyam's* Project Gutenberg' is replaced by the English word which is, 'Project Madurai is *Tamil Internet's* Project Gutenberg', the word order would still remain the same. It can be concluded that most of the Tamil words used in the homepage belong to the noun category which did not affect the word order of the English sentences in the homepage.

4.2.2.1 Why Tamil words are used

The participants in Tamil.Net were able to recognize and consider the particular features of the text where certain words belonging to the Tamil cybercommunity such as *Kuyil* and *Vikatan* which are links to Tamil magazines and *Anjal* and *Akaram* which links to the Tamil software were used. These words are understood and shared by all the online participants of Tamil.Net. The producer of Tamil.Net had also used other Tamil words

in the homepage such as *Anbudan* meaning 'dear' and *bashai* meaning 'language' mainly to show shared ethnicity. As mentioned by Holmes (2001), where a choice of language is available for communication, it is often possible for an individual to signal their ethnicity by the language they choose to use even by short phrases. The types of Tamil words used in the homepage are as follows :

a. Terms relating to technology texts

The homepage has the properties of technology texts pointed out by Shortis (2001) as was mentioned in Chapter 2. Technology texts can be brought together according to the topic or subject and be given a tag. These tagged texts allow complex search links to each other. Producers of technology texts are aware of the recipient's competence in understanding such tags. Similarly, Tamil.Net producer had used tags with implicit meanings such as *Anjal*, *Akaram* (Tamil Software), *Kuyil*, *Vikatan* (Tamil magazines), which only a member of the Tamil community can understand. Such words are used without any hesitation nor any explanation. A click on these tags mentioned above will link to the Tamil software and Tamil magazines which are freely downloadable.

b. Fashion or coined words

As the homepage also had features of a spoken text as pointed out earlier, words are combined in a casual manner more for style than for a lexical need. The term '*Chennai ite*' meaning 'from Madras or Chennai', is a mixing of two languages brought about not by any rule but a kind of trendy social skill understood by all recipients. It shows familiarity and solidarity. There was a creative use of language combination to attract participants. '*He is witty with his Madras bashai*' - the word bashai literally means language but in this sentence, it means much more. It refers to the style used by people in Madras which is quite distinct from the other Tamil speaking people in India. It is similar to the Londoners speaking Cockney English. Similarly, *Madurai Thittam* on the surface means Project Madurai. But the word *Thittam* carries deeper meaning. It refers to a grand, long-term idea

c. Food

Certain names of food have a cultural intonation which is identified with certain cultures. In the homepage of Tamil.Net, the word 'rasam' was used not to actually talk about the food but to indicate a cultural identity. For instance, '*if it aint your cup of rasam*', is similar to saying 'if it aint your cup of tea'. *Rasam* refers to a kind of Indian soup which tastes sour and spicy. It is traditionally drunk to aid digestion after a meal. Using *rasam*

instead of tea carries with it a cultural meaning and the usage of it in the homepage of Tamil.Net was more of a stylistic code-switch used for emphasis or contrast.

d. Expressions of belongings

There is a need by the producer of text to be accepted by the recipients of Tamil.Net to ensure future support for the website. Therefore, the producer of text has penned off '*Anbudan/Bala*', meaning 'with love/Bala'. He had signed off in Tamil despite starting off and proceeding the text in English. It shows a need to be accepted by the Tamil community using the website. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Anie, 1998), the choice of the listeners' native code served the purpose of affiliating the producer of the text with the group to gain the community's social approval and support for their undivided commitment. The perceived attempt by the producer of text to use the native language would be seen as utilizing the cultural identity which results in bonding feelings between the producer and recipient of text.

e. Names of famous people

The interpretation of the meaning of text and words used was determined by the producer and recipients by both the situational context and culture as is shown by Kok (2001) in Chapter 2. There were many

instances in the homepage where personal names were referred to. These names actually refer to the participants of Tamil.Net. In one instance, there was a reference to a great poetic sage who was a well known philosopher amongst the Tamilians : *a great summary of our discussions on Thiruvalluvar.* . Only a person who knows about the Tamil culture would know who 'Thiruvalluvar' is and that to click on that name would link to his philosophical writings. The Tamil words used in the homepage are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.
Tamil Lexical Items in the Homepage

Categories	Number of occurrences
Terms relating to technology texts	11
Fashion ed or coined words	3
Tamil magazines	2
Indian Food	1
Expression of belonging	1
Names of famous people	1
Total	19

Table 4.3. shows that there were 19 Tamil words, out of which two were links to Tamil magazines and one was a pronoun which linked to works relating to a famous poet found in the homepage. Most of the Tamil words used were terms relating to technology texts, followed by fashion or coined words, food and expression of belongings.

4.3. Research Question 3 : Is there a pattern of code-switching found in the emails?

Before the pattern of code-switching can be detected, the types of lexical items which are code-switched should be analysed. To do this, the Tamil lexical items in English sentences and the English lexical items in Tamil sentences were picked up. These borrowed lexical items in the midst of sentences did not have any common pattern to explain the meaning. It was assumed that the usage of these words would be understood by the receiver of the message. The words were categorised under a general topic as shown in Tables 4.4 – 4.6.. This would make it easier to understand the type of lexical items which were used for code-switching in the emails.

Table 4.4.
Words Belonging to a Foreign Language

<u>Foreign words in Tamil sentences</u>	Meaning
Sayonara	'Goodbye' in Japanese
Ma vie en rose	Name of a French Film

Table 4.5.

**English Words in
Tamil Sentences**

<u>English words in Tamil sentences</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Names of Famous Persons	
Ludovic	Federic Vester
Bestrand Russel	L Wittgeinstein
George Berkeley	
Technical words	
12K	Audio
Bone amplifier	Cigarette
Computer	Hi fi (high fidelity)
(high) Hoover	Phone
Scissors	Screw driver
sound	Speaker
Speech/speak	Stereo effect (Tamil script)
Stereo speaker	Vacuum machine
Use of English phrases	
Excerpt [snip]	Mapping morality, awareness, and 'self' in the brain
Mind in a mirror	Practical (Tamil script)
See....aggainn	Stereo typical features (Tamil script)

Table 4.6

Tamil words

in English Sentences

<u>Tamil words in English sentences</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Names of Famous Persons	
Chakravathy	A great Emperor
Chandiya	A Famous Warrior
Nawvalar	One who is a good speaker
Religious terms	
Ekambaram	Omnipotent
Perumawi	Refers to Lord Vishnu
Ulagalakkum Perumawi	Also refers to Lord Vishnu
Food	
Ellurundai	Indian sweet especially made for festive season
Cutchaayam	Indian sweet
Words relating to music and sound	
Giwthanadam	Sound of Music
Navilugiradhu	The way an infant talks
Navilugrawrgal	The way old people who cannot talk communicates
Phrase or expressions	
Eppadi Navilugiradhu Indha Nadhini Theriumaw?	How nicely it emits sound, you know?
NawdhaGiwthan En Nawthan!	Music from stereo speaker
Idhu Vinowdhini! Thewninum Iniyadhu!	This is strange miracle! It is sweeter than honey!

Table 4.6 continued	
Names of Place	Meaning
Eelam	Tamil name for 'Sri Lanka'
Relating to Internet	
iNaiyam	Internet

Tables 4.4 - 4.6 show that besides English words in Tamil sentences and Tamil words in English sentences, there were two occurrences of foreign words in Tamil sentences. English words in Tamil sentences were Names of Famous Persons, technical words and phrases, whereas the Tamil words found in the English sentences belong to varied categories such as Names of Famous Persons, religious terms, food, terms relating to music and sound, phrases, places and terms relating to the Internet. An explanation of why these words are used follows :

4.3.1. Foreign lexical items in Tamil sentences

The foreign lexical items found in two of the emails as shown below are unique words which are used spontaneously. Certain lexical words such as names of movies and commonly used words are in the memory so are used spontaneously. Switching to these words reflect a lexical need that occur in response to internal factors (Vales-Fallis). . The foreign lexical items found in the emails were :

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 1 : 'Ma vie en rose'. 'My Life is Pink'

'Ma vie en rose' and 'My life is Pink' refers to the name of a French movie and the original name had been retained with a translation in English. The sender of this email had seen this French movie and wished to share his views with the others in the discussion group. A name remains a name in whatever language it is spoken or written. As such, the French movie with its direct translation in English has been retained.

Email 11 : அதுவரை... சயோனரா!!! (Meaning : Till then Sayonara – sayonara is in Tamil script). *Sayonara* is a Japanese word which can only carry the true meaning in its original form. It has been written in Tamil script but retaining its original pronunciation. The sender of this email seem excited about going off to Kyoto for a conference. He not only had announced his absence for four days but has also signed off in the Japanese language indicating he is going to be part of Japan for the next few days.

4.3.2. English lexical items in Tamil sentences

The English lexical items in the Tamil sentences consist of names of famous persons, technical words, and phrases. Out of these, the technical words occurred most. The categories of the English lexical items are as follows :

a. Names of Famous Persons

There were five instances in two emails where names were mentioned. These are names of famous philosophers and the participants had felt the need to retain the original form. Pronouns represent lexical items not related to the language used by the participants. Both the emails had the message texts in Tamil script but these names of persons were written in English in order to maintain the accuracy and pronunciation to the language used by the participant. They have to be maintained in its original form.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 1 : லுடாவிச் (Ludovic). திகைத்துப்போன

Email 12 : தத்துவவியல்ஞானிகள் Bestrand Russell , L. Wittgeinstein

Ferederic Vester என்பார் கூறுகிறார்,

தத்துவவியலாளர் George Berkely என்பாரின்

Since these emails were discussing about worldwide famous philosophers and writers, the sender had assumed that these names would be known by all if written in English. Transliterating these words into the Tamil script might alter the pronunciation and might erroneously refer to other persons.

b. Technical words

Words in this category are actually technical words which may not be replaced by words from Tamil. Even if they may be, the sender might

not be proficient in Tamil to replace these words and this switch actually reflects a lexical need. Anie Attan (1998) described English technical words as words which have been widely recognised and conventionalised by the community. As such, for accuracy, it would be easier to stick to these English words. The following examples refer to technical words which were code switched.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 10 : ... ஸ்டீரியோ எபெக்ட்" ... (Meaning : 'stereo effect' in tamil script)

... 12K தான் (Meaning : only 12K)

Email 16 : - Vacuum machine ஐ Hoover என்றும், cigarette ஐ scissors என்று... "speaker"

(Meaning : We have heard people refering to Vacuum machine high Hoover and cigarette high scissors. Similarly to the word speaker).

- "stereo speaker" என்பது பற்றியும் கருத்துத் தெரிவிக்கப் பட்டது.

(Meaning : Opinions on Stereo speaker have been given)

- ஆனால் hi-fi (High fidelity - தற்கும் தமிழ் தேவை) எனப்படும்

(Meaning : But hi-fi / high fidelity needs a Tamil word).

Email 19 : - Computer, screw driver, speaker etc. தமிழும் தற்கு

- அவ்வகையில் audio என்பதற்குப்

Email 21 - speech/speak

- மொழிகளில் phone என்று வரும்

- சுண்டு ந்தையிரோப்பிய மொழிகளில் sound என மாறும்.

Email 27 - ஒலி பெருக்கப் படுகிறது(Bone Amplifier).

(Meaning : Discussions are being carried out on the words above).

c. Use of English phrases

English phrases have been used five times in the midst of Tamil sentences. These phrases represent expressions which does not carry the same meaning when translated. Email 13 had used 'Excerpt [snip]' , a short and curt verb phrase meaning the excerpt had been omitted. Most probably, the excerpt could have been in English. Email 29 had used two English words but these words were in Tamil script. 'Stereo typical features' and 'practical' are words which are difficult to interpret in Tamil. In fact, certain English words like 'practical' do not have a Tamil equivalent. The title of the news excerpts in email 31 was too long to be translated into Tamil. Email 37 had an expression 'see...agggain...' which has no equivalent in Tamil.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 13 : Excerpt: [snip]

Email 29 : - (ஸ்டீரியோ டிபிகல் 'பீசர்ஸ்' என்னென்ன?

(Meaning : 'stereo typical features' in tamil script)

- டிப்ளோமா பெறுபவர்கள் ஆனால் பிராக்டிகல்லா ஒன்றும்

(Meaning : 'practical' in tamil script).

Email 30 : MIND IN A MIRROR

Mapping Morality, awareness, and 'self' in the brain. எனும் தலைப்பில்

(Meaning : referring to an article with this title)

Email 36 : எனக்கு...(see.. agggain...):

4.3.3. Tamil lexical items in English sentences

The Tamil lexical items in the English sentences consist of pronouns, religious terms, food, words relating to music and sound, names of places and terms relating to the Internet. Names of Famous Persons seem to be the only common category which had occurrence in both the English and Tamil sentences. The other lexical items as shown below reflect a lexical need.

a. Names of Famous Persons

Names of people in whatever language are irreplaceable as was mentioned earlier when names were written in English when the message text was in Tamil. To refer to famous people in a particular culture would normally carry an underlying meaning understood by the people in that ethnic group. For example :

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 5 : 'To be a *Chandiya*' 'Chandiya' refers to a great warrior.

Email 27 : 'Globalization is man-made and is creating a *Chakravathy*'. 'Chakravathy' was a great emperor. *Chandiya* and *Chakravathy* means great people in the Tamil culture and history. Referring someone by these names actually refers to the characteristics of these past great heros

Email 32 : 'Actually *NawValar* means gifted speaker'. 'Nawvalar' was a great saint from India

If these famous historical people were replaced by names from the Western culture, such as Hitler or Lincoln, the cultural connotations intended would be lost. Cultural meaning is at times very distinctive between cultures and so names of famous historical people cannot be interchanged as the cultural values inherent in these names, will be lost.

b. Religious terms

These are words which convey religious meanings. Email 27 was an English message text discussing science and religion. Scientific words like 'satellites' were used in English but religious terms although in Roman alphabet used Tamil words such as, '*Ulagalakkum Peramawi*' which means an omnipresent Lord. The English translation of these words would not convey the actual cultural and religious connotation as these Tamil words. The words used in Email 27 are as follows :

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 27 : - '*Ekaambaram* is one umbrella, which is of the lord' (*Ekaambaram* occurred 5times)

- 'There is always a possibility that a *Ulagalakkum Peramawi* would be born.'

The Tamil ethnic race do not belong to one particular religion. Throughout the world, it is common to see Tamilians who are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Bahais and Buddhists. However, they are united by the language and culture. Hinduism which started in India is strongly correlated with the

Indian culture and daily undertakings. As such, any Tamilian irregardless of their religion would be able to understand and discuss about Hinduism at least to a small extent. In this discussion group, there are non-Hindus participating as is seen by names such as : 'nasirhm@fedu,uec.ac.jp'. However, discussion about the Hindu religion is no taboo and is open for discussion among the participants.

c. Food

There are two words as shown below refering to names of Indian food which have no equivalent in other languages. They are names of sweets which are must be served during the festive season of Deepavali and so have no equivalent in any other language

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 2 : 'Treat yourself with *Ellurundai and Cutchaayam*'.

d. Words relating to music and sound

Musical and sound-related terms are contextual switching whereby switching occurs to fill in the lexical gap especially where culture, religion and traditions differ between two languages. The words shown below are retained in the original language to avoid confusion or to avoid any alteration to traditional and cultural context of the terms.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 32 : -*NawdhaGiwthan En Nawthan!*

Sound of Music: *GiwthaNadham!* There is a movie with that title!

-One can say about a stereo speaker: *Eppadi Navilugiradhu Indha Nadhini, Theriumaw?* This speaker, how nicely it emits sounds. *Naviludhal* is literally using tongue to emit a sound, so to speak! An infant only *Navilugiradhu*. Old people who cannot speak fluently *Navilugirawrgal*. *Nadhini* is nice for advertisement purposes also. One ad could read: *Nadhini: Idhu Vinowdhini! Thewninum Iniyadhu!*

This email had discussed about the other possibilities about using Tamil words for 'speaker' and 'sound effects'. The sender had used very abstract and fine meanings closely related to arts and music and wonders if they could be used to describe the sound effects from stereo speakers.

e. Names of places

As with pronouns, names of places are usually retained in their original form for accuracy. In Email 4 as shown below, the word 'Ealam' which refers to the northern portion of Sri Lanka populated by mostly Tamilians is used. The sender of the message must have been from Sri Lanka and wished to convey Deepavali greetings to other participants in the discussion group.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 4 : 'You have received a *Ealam* greeting'.

f. Words refering to Internet

The most commonly used word which refered to Internet was '*Inaiyam*' meaning 'Internet'. It had occurred both in the message text of the emails and as an opening in emails 2, 4 and 35. It is a form of identity marker amongst the participants online and was also found in the homepage. The Tamil online community seems to have regarded this word as part of the Internet vocabulary. It is a borrowed lexical item from Tamil to English in Tamil.Net. Examples of '*Inaiyam*' being used in the emails are as follows :

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 2 : Happy Diwali.. *Inaiyam*

Email 4 : Hello 'Thamizh *Inaiyam*' (in Tamil script)

Email 35 : Dear Taamil *Inaiyam*

Generally, it can be concluded that words refering to Internet, names of places, music and sound, food, religious terms, and pronouns and phrases represent lexical borrowings from Tamil to English. In the case of lexical borrowings from English to Tamil, it was found when there was a need to refer to technical words, pronouns and phrases or expressions. As mentioned by Holmes (2001, 42), people borrow words from another language to express a concept or describe an object for which there is no obvious word available in the language they are using. Borrowing of this kind, mainly

nouns, is motivated by a lexical need. Holmes also states that specific terms referring to food and religion are words that ethnic minorities may use to distinguish themselves from the majority group.

4.3.4. Patterns of code-switching

According to Valdes-Fallis , code-switching has been found to be neither random nor meaningless. Rather, it is a device that conveys important social information ranging from role relationships between speakers to feelings of solidarity, intimacy, and so forth. According to Valdes-Fallis (1978) strategies of code-switching were used to detect the pattern of code-switching in the chosen emails. There were instances of code-switching which had occurred to reflect social information such as settings and role relations.

In the context of situation where the setting is the Internet, the titles of the emails at times did not reflect the language of the text messages. As was observed by Le Vasan (1996), communicating on the Internet costs money and time and so the participants paid little attention to change the language of the title to suit the text message.

There seem to be a sort of agreement in relation to role relations in terms of openings and closings. As observed by Hudson (1980), an individual chooses where to locate himself in society and this act of identity

has an influence on his choice of language. Most of the openings and closings are in Tamil indicating that the participants have come to an agreement that they have identified themselves with the group.

The patterns of code-switching found in the emails are described in the following section.

4.3.4.1. Code-switching as a means of reflecting social information

This happens when the community uses two languages in different domains and settings. The language choice will depend on the situation. It can happen when the speakers are shifting their role relation with regard to another and when there is a shift in topics ; and when the speakers are responding to the particular characteristics of the setting. The choice of language used in greetings is an indicator of respect and a desire to break down cultural barriers. For example in Email 3 (Appendix 2), the sender is specifically sending the mail to Mr. Manickam and he writes 'Anbulla Thiru Manickam' (meaning Dear Mr Manickam). In Email 11, the sender is referring to everybody as 'Anbin Iniya nanbargalae' (meaning Dearest Friends). In Email 15, everyone is referred to as 'Anbu Tholargalae' (meaning Dear Comrades). It was observed that when the messages were very general such as discussions on religion or excerpts from articles, there were no greetings or acknowledgments at all. The language of the openings

and closings in the emails was compared to the language of the text message to look into the language choice which reflects a social need.

a. Role relations

Openings and closings are greetings which are determined by the role relation one has to another. Elderly people, peer group, people with higher or lower status and intimate relationships are each greeted in a different way according to the Tamil culture. In this study, to analyse the code-switching strategies used in role relations, the openings and closings of these emails were analysed.

There were a total of 18 emails out of 37 mixed emails, with openings in Tamil. 16 out of these had also closings in Tamil, 1 email had closings in English and one had no closing at all. Similarly, there were 7 emails with no openings at all but with closings in Tamil. One email had openings in the mixed code, but had closings in Tamil. The only email with an English message text had both openings and closings in Tamil but in roman script. The language of the openings and closings of the emails are shown in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 in the next page.

Table 4.7.**Opening and Closings in the Mixed Emails**

No openings nor closings	7
Openings and closings in Tamil	14
Openings and closings in English	1
Openings in Tamil, with no closings	1
Openings in Tamil, closings in English	1
Openings in mixed code, closings in English	1
Openings in mixed code, closings in Tamil	2
No openings, but closings in Tamil	7
No openings, but closings in English	3
Total	37 mixed emails

In Table 4.7, it shows that overall, out of 37 mixed emails, there was only 1 email with both openings and closings in English. However, 5 emails had closings in English despite starting off in Tamil but closing in English (1 email), mixed openings but closing in English (1 email) and 3 emails with no openings but closings in English.

Table 4.8.

Openings and Closings in the Emails

Email	Opening	Closing
3	Anbulla Thiru Manickam	Vanakkam. Anbudan
4	Hello தமிழினையம்,	From ரஸஸ்
6	[none]	From Krishan panjali & family, Singapore.
7	அன்பு நண்பர்களை	அன்புடன் மீரன்
9	அரவீந்தன் அவர்களை,	மஜுசு
11	அன்பின் னையை நண்பர்களுக்கு _____	அன்புடன்
13	அன்புடன்	பூமன்ணி
14	Vanakkam	Regards Bharathy
15	அன்பு தமிழ் தோழர்களை..!	அன்புசெனை.கி.அரவீந்த
16	அன்புள்ளோரே	அன்புடன்
17	Dear Nasir & Sethuraman	Best regards, Arasu
19	சாந்தியும் சமாதானமும் உண்டாவதாக	அன்புடன்..நாஸிர்
20	அன்பிற்குரிய - ணையத்தாருக்கு,	:அன்புடன்,
21	சாந்தியும் சமாதானமும் உண்டாவதாக	அன்புடன்..நாஸிர்
22	Vanakkam	Anpudan

Table 4.8 continued' Email	Opening	Closing
25	வணக்கம் செந்தூரன்	[none]
27	To all : Vanakkam	Nanri
30	[none]	:அன்புடன்,
31	வணக்கம்	:அன்புடன்,
32	[none]	nanri
33	[none]	நன்றி,
35	Dear Taamil Iniyam	Anbudan
36	னிய நன்பர்கலெ	பூபதி
37	வணக்கம்	சி கமரபாரதி

From Table 4.8, it can be seen that emails No 4, 14, 27, 32 and 35 were emails with messages mainly in English. However, there was a need to address the other participants in Tamil. Most probably, the sender was not proficient in the Tamil language but to be part of the community, he had greeted in Tamil using the roman script. As such, to feel part of the group, the chosen language for greetings from both openings and closings as shown below was in Tamil.

Refer to Appendix 2

Email 4 : Hello தமிழிணையம், meaning Hello Tamil Internet

Email 14 : 'Vanakkam' as opening with 'Regards' as closing

Email 27 : 'To all : Vanakkam' with 'Nanri' meaning Thanks as closing

Email 32 : Closing "*Nanri*" meaning 'Thank you'.

Email 35 : 'Dear *Taamil Iniyam*' meaning Dear Tamil Internet

Email 2 had no opening but had a greeting on the first sentence. 'Happy Diwali *iNaiyam*' meaning Happy Diwali Internet. Although 'Inaiyam' literally means Internet in Tamil, it actually includes the participants also.

There were random switches of high-frequency items in the openings and closings. High-frequency words include; *vanakkam* which is a form of greeting, *anbudan* meaning dear, regards, hello. The word 'hello' is used together with the Tamil greeting. Such a greeting in the native language is an indicator of respect and desire to break down barriers. There seems to be a need to address the group in the mother tongue even when the sentences were in English. To express solidarity and intimacy, the speakers usually speak in their mother tongue as a form of identity marker which is normally used by speakers to express something in their mother tongue when they are speaking in a foreign language.

Research in language choice shows that if a bilingual speaker is perceived to put effort to use the native language of the other person, the speaker would be perceived favourably. The speaker is seen to be acknowledging the inherent worth of the culture and identity which results in positive feelings towards each other and often in reciprocal accommodating behaviour (Holmes, 2001).

b. Characteristics of settings

The mixed emails were analysed for the language used in the text message and the language of the title. Title here refers to the subject topic. When a reply to a mail is posted, email settings use the same subject topic unless altered by the sender. Most times, Internet users tend to use the same title to save time. In this study, using the same title which was in English simply means that the receiver had understood the original English mail and when replying, he makes his choice of replying in either English or Tamil.

In this study, it was found that there were a total of 14 emails which had titles in English as shown in Table 4.7 below. In most cases, the preceding emails were in English and when the recipient decides to reply, the original title was maintained. This had no connection with the language choice of the text which followed.

Table 4.9

Language of Titles and Message Text

Email No	Title	Language of message text
1	Ma vie en rose (My life if Pink)	Tamil
2	Wish you all a Happy Diwali	English
3	Re : [tamil] Wish you all..	Tamil

Table 4.9 continued'		
Email No	Title	Language of message text
4	You have received a Ealam..	English
5	Murder of Presidential..	English
6	Deepavali Greetings	Bilingual
7	Kaana! mIndum	Tamil
8	Azivil uNmai	Tamil
9	Re : [Tamil] AIADMK website launched	Tamil
10	No title	Tamil
11	Off till Saturday	Bilingual
12	Ulake Mayam	Tamil
13	No title	Tamil
14	Tamil.net/Erumbugalin Melbourne	English
15	AIADMK website launched	Tamil
16	Speakers (stereo effect – 1)	Tamil
17	Re : [Tamil] Speakers..	English
18	3befofb6.f7	Tamil
19	Re : [Tamil] speakers.	Tamil
20	No title	Tamil
21	Re : [Tamil] Speakers	Tamil
22	Stereo Effect	Tamil
23	Thought 4 the day	English
24	Speakers [Re : (stereo effect)	Tamil
25	(in Tamil script)	Tamil
26	Re : [Tamil] Mirror..	Tamil

<p>'Table 4.9 continued'</p> <p>Email No</p>	<p>Title</p>	<p>Language of message text</p>
27	Ulake Mayam	Tamil
28	Re : [Tamil] FWD : An European..	English
29	Azivil uNmai	Bilingual
30	Re : [Tamil] thought 4 the day	Tamil
31	Ulake mayam – a short note	Tamil
32	Interview with God	Tamil
33	No title	English
34	Re : [Tamil] (in tamil script)	Tamil
35	My grandfather..	Tamil
36	The circle of life	English
37	Paadu Oru Pattu	Tamil
38	Tamil Nation archives	Tamil

With reference to Table 4.9, Emails 3, 9, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 29 were - actually replies to previous emails which had titles in English and these same titles were used. In fact, there were only two emails with the title in Tamil script. The others were either in English or used transliterated Tamil words. This was a feature of setting which was too troublesome to be altered.

All the email addresses of the participants were in English. This is quite inevitable given the characteristics of the setting. In Internet, the domain addresses and the email facilities are in English. There have been attempts to improvise domains in foreign languages. However, it has yet to become popular. All the emails start off with the address and name of the sender in English. Furthermore, such email addresses also happen in the middle of Tamil message texts. The language choice of the text usually is independent of the title but dependent on the personal choice of the person replying and the topics discussed except for these addresses. As is shown in Valdes – Fallis (1978), this is a form of contextual switching pattern that occurs in response to external factors such as Internet setting. There were 8 occurrences of website addresses in the message texts as shown below indicating that it is a contextual need determined by the setting :

www.TamilNation.org

<http://web.archive.org/>

www.kaanal.com

www.aiadmkindia.org

www16.brinkster.com

www.reata.org

www.groups.yahoo.com

www.vinunjal.com

(8 occurrences of addresses in Tamil message texts)

4.3.4.2. Code-switching as a stylistic process

There were occurrences of code-switching which were used for stylistic process. This depends on the speaker's personal preference for one or the other of the two languages. Code-switching as a stylistic process can occur when there is a repetition of the same item in two languages; when one language is used for narration whilst the other language is used as the language of paraphrase; when the items in one language do not have equivalent words of the same strength in the other language; or when the words are used to emphasise ethnic content; and use of both languages for poetic use (Valdes-Fallis, 1978).

Out of the 37 mixed emails, there were 4 emails which had a parallel text in both English and Tamil. They are Emails number 6, 11, 28 and 30. Email number 6 was a poetic Deepavali greeting. Poetic expressions are difficult to be replaced by another language. To convey the same meaning, the original language was maintained while a translated version was given.

Email number 11 was a personal farewell message by a sender who was going to present his research paper at a conference. He wanted to announce his absence from the discussion for four days. To make sure all recipients know about his absence, he had written in both English and Tamil. The same contents have been expressed first in Tamil, then in

English. The reason is not just for contents, but to express friendship and solidarity.

Email number 28 was on religion. It was extracted from a religious poetic text. The original extract in Tamil, followed by the same verse in roman script (transliterated form) and later the meaning of the verse was given in English. The reason for the transliterated version is that some of the recipients may not be able to read the Tamil script. The meaning in English was given because these religious texts are actually literature which are not easy to comprehend. The Tamilians all over the world, who do not reside in a Tamil-speaking environment, usually speak and understand Tamil on a moderate level. Literature texts could be too difficult for them to understand. Email number 30 is about an article on philosophy 'Mind in a Mirror'. The original verse in English follows the explanation in Tamil. In both emails number 11 and 30, the assumption is that all recipients understand English well. But the assumption seems not to be the same for the level of Tamil language understanding.

4.3.4.3. Code-switching as part of the overall proficiency of bilingual speakers

There were discussions going on in the group. The participants were trying to find the equivalent word in Tamil for English technical words. A few members were giving their versions of the Tamil

equivalent for these English words. Some of them disagreed with the words suggested. A few of them gave lengthy explanations of the various words which can be used to replace these English words. There were even attempts to replace noun phrases such as ‘came to existence’, ‘one to one’, and ‘nature of matter’. Whether the Tamil equivalent will be used in place of these English technical words in future is something which we are not sure about.

Table 4.10 below shows the English words which had equivalent words in Tamil. The participants had used both languages for these words in their discussion. These words were found in Emails 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 26. The participants had drawn on their knowledge of both English and Tamil and have shown their proficiency of both languages. They have code-switched for rhetorical reasons.

Table 4.10.

English Words which had the Tamil Equivalent Word in the Discussion.

Amplifier	audiable
Audio	Bass low frequency
Bass speaker	Came to existence
CD	Chemical reaction
Concave lens and concentration of solar radiation	Ear canal
Earphone	Electric amplifier
Existence of Matter	Flash intro
Handle	Hearing

"Table 4.10 continued".	
Hi-fi (High fidelity)	High
Horn	humour
Ideas	Lift
Loudspeaker	Mechanical
Mic/receiver	Nature of matter
One to one	Optical
Ossicles	Perceptions
Query	Seperator – divider
Smelling	sound
Sound amplifier	speaker
Speech/speak	State of the art
Stereo effect	Stereo speaker
String	Tasting
Telephone	Touching
Twister	Tympanic membrane or eardrum

From Table 4.10, it was found that most of the words used were technical and scientific words. In the Tamil.Net, some of the participants have shown high proficiency in both languages especially for technical words. As mentioned by Valdes-Fallis (1978), the degree of proficiency in a language enables the speakers to alternate between the languages. According to Valdes-Fallis (1978), speakers usually code-switch when they are speaking the weaker language. This can be done either to emphasise

something or if they cannot find the equivalent word in the weaker language. There are four stages in language proficiency. In the initial stage, speakers learn English through their mother tongue and so English is used only in those domains where the mother tongue cannot be used. The fourth or final stage is the exact reverse of the initial stage. However, in the Tamil.Net, some of the participants seem to have given both languages equal importance and are able to code-switch from either languages with ease.

These technical words shown in Table 4.10, have a long-established tradition of being widely used to refer to states of condition, for technical purposes and are also scientifically-known words. These specialised words were well-understood by the majority of the community. Attempts to find the Tamil equivalent were encouraging. However, the effectiveness of the meaning might not be achieved as well when compared to the conventional practice of using English equivalents. Moreover, the Tamil equivalent seems too difficult for ordinary Tamil people to understand. The fact that the members of the community made the effort to find Tamil equivalents for these words reflect the high level of proficiency of the members in both Tamil and English.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the data collected was used to answer the research questions. For Research Question 1, it was analysed that English

dominates the homepage but Tamil dominates the email communication. For Research Question 2, it was observed that the use of English in the homepage was more as a result of a contextual need where the situation is more suited for the use of English. However, the producer of text had tried to use a few Tamil words to reflect the shared ethnicity with the participants of this website. For Research Question 3, it was found that there was a pattern of code-switching in the emails and they were used to reflect a social need, for style and also to show the language proficiency of participants in both languages. The following chapter will conclude the analysis of this website and make recommendations for future directions.