

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Background of the Study : Tamil Language Structure and Language Use

Tamil is a South Dravidian language and it is considered as one of the ancient languages of the Dravidian family of languages. It has a long literary and grammatical tradition, heritage and history dating back to the 3rd century B.C. This language is recognized by the government of India as a classical language in the year 2004. Tamil has two distinct varieties: (i) known as **SeyyuL Valakku** (Literary Variety) and (ii) **Ulaka Valakku** (Spoken Variety), even from the ancient times. The earliest extant grammatical treatise **Tolkappiyam** mentions this kind of dichotomy that exists in Tamil language use. Tolkappiyar the earliest extant Tamil grammarian mentions that he had the opportunity to learn and understand the grammatical works that were available to him and incorporated them in his grammar namely Tolkappiyam.

Tamil made history by establishing a learned body of scholars known as *Sangam* from the very ancient times and this body approved the literary works submitted by scholars and pundits of that period and given due recognition to those literary works. Such literary works were referred to as the **Sangam Literature** or in other words classical literature of Tamil. The classical literature of Tamil has two major divisions known as *Aham* and *PuRam* literatures. Tamil literary tradition formulated literary theories and started creating literary works based on those principles. Such literary works were sub-classified as **Major Literature** (Pe:rilakkiyam) and **Minor Literature** works (CiRRilakkiyam).

The grammatical treatise *Tolkappiyam* is unique not only in the classification and description of Tamil structures (phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax) but also in content – namely the inclusion of the social grammar of Tamils. As a result, this grammatical treatise is not only considered as a grammatical work but also a social grammar that brought to light the internal life of the Tamil community in different dimensions.

The literary and grammatical history of Tamil shows there were a number of literary and grammatical works and treatises produced by various scholars at different periods. These include grammatical treatises such *Nannu:l*, *Viracoliyam*, etc. and literary works like *ThirukkuraL*, *Cilappathikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Civaka Cintamani*, *Thirumantiram*, *Thivya Prapantham*, *Thevaram*, *Thiruvagasam*, *Periyapuram*, *Sivagnana Potham*, *Kamba Ramayanam* and so on. The modern period of the Tamil literary history may be said to begin from the 16th century. There were a number of literary and grammatical works, prose writings etc. produced during this period as well.

Apart from the native scholars, there were many European Missionaries who rendered yeomen and meaningful service by producing not only literary creations but also translations, lexicographical – etymological works like dictionaries, glossaries etc. and grammars of spoken and literary varieties. The names and works of Beschi, Caldwell, Pope, Percival, Fabricius, Winslow and others will be ever remembered. It was Beschi who produced, for the first time, a Tamil dictionary on the model of the European languages (Jothimuthu,1965). Until then the dictionaries were in the poetic form. G.U. Pope's translations of *ThirukkuraL*, *Nalatiyar* and *Thiruvagasam* are noteworthy contributions.

The history of Tamil language shows certain changes both in structure and use due to the impact of external factors like language contact, linguistic interference, socio-cultural aspects and so on. Among the Dravidian languages Tamil is the most widespread language in several South and South East Asian countries like Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Singapore and Fiji Islands. In addition to these countries Tamil is also used in South Africa, Re Union Islands, as well as in many other countries in the east and west.

According to Arasaratnam(1970:3), the earliest evidence of Indian presence and influence in Malaya is found in the South Kedah and Province Wellesley regions, in the form of fragmentary inscriptions written in Indian script of the fourth and fifth centuries. At the beginning they came to Malaya as traders. Later on, from the early years of nineteenth century Indians started to migrate to Malaya looking for economic opportunities. Tamils in Malaysia were brought by the British either from South India or Sri Lanka. They came here to work in the rubber and coffee plantations first. Though other linguistic groups were also present within these migrated communities, Tamil speakers were numerically much larger than the other groups.

During the early stages of migration, Tamil speakers often maintained their Tamil socio- cultural tradition and language by having constant contact with Tamil Nadu in India and Sri Lanka. Even Tamil magazines and literary publications were imported from Tamilnadu (South India) during that period.

As time passed, they felt the need to have their own inherent mechanism to maintain their language and culture in the migrated land itself. This made the Tamils to negotiate with the British to establish Tamil schools and places of worship in the country in order to maintain their language and culture. Consequently Tamil language teaching was

started in Penang Free School in the year 1816. During the course of time several more schools were started and developed in various estates and towns where Tamils lived. Invariably in these schools Tamil became the active instructional language. At present there are 523 Tamil schools in Malaysia (*Malaysia was known as Malaya until 16th September 1963) and Tamil is being taught formally from primary school till the tertiary level.

When the use of Tamil and the maintenance of this language was widened in several other social domains, the Malaysian Tamils felt the importance of creating their own Tamil literature exclusive to the Malaysian Peninsula. This is mainly because of the unique language ecology of Malaysia involving Malay and Chinese communities. This kind of sociolinguistic situation is entirely different from that of the sociolinguistic situation existing in Tamilnadu (South India). As a result of this kind of situation, many indigenous magazines and newspapers were started and published in Malaysia.

Today in Malaysia there are a number of Tamil magazines, newspapers, anthologies of short stories, poems and novels published locally as well as periodically. These reading materials in Tamil are published daily, fortnightly and monthly. These materials are not only beneficial to enrich the use of Tamil language, but also depict the significance of Malaysian Tamil culture and tradition.

The Tamil dailies and magazines became one of the avenues for the local writers to expose and bring out their talents in Tamil language, culture and literature in a formalized and systematic way. Since the beginning of the 19th century till today many literary writers have emerged from the Malaysian Tamil community. They all have used the Malaysian background and the problems faced by the Malaysian Tamils in different

dimensions such as social, economic, political, educational, trade, commerce and various others related to the Tamil community as the themes of their writings.

Language being a tool used to communicate various concepts and ideas with reference to the socio - cultural environment in which it is spoken, every language undergoes certain changes from time to time. In other words, no language is static in its existence. Rather, it is dynamic with different degrees of variation. So, one could find a number of significant changes both in language structure (like phonological, morphological, syntactical and partly semantic etc.) as well as in language use in different domains of social functions. Tamil is not an exception to this trend of change. So, compared to the earlier Tamil linguistic structures and the conceptual framework found in the publications which came from Malaysian Peninsula, the current situation of Tamil publication shows significant changes taking place in actual use of the language. There are new coinages, creations, adoptions, nativisations due to the changing socio-cultural and linguistic milieu.

1.1 Tamil Diglossia and Its Functional Significance

Tamil is a highly diglossic language and there are two varieties of Tamil viz., (i) The Literary Tamil (Sentamil) and (ii) The Spoken Tamil (Peccut Tamil). These two varieties existed even at the time of Tolkappiyam, the earliest extant Tamil grammatical treatise, as the author of that work mentions in clear terms about the existence of such varieties in use (Seyyul Valakku and Ulaka Valakku). Dialectal words have found their way into the vocabulary of the standard language either by virtue of the intrinsic worth or by the authority of the poets who pressed them into services (Sethu Pillai, 1953). The two distinct varieties had parallel development and functional significance since then and continued to be so even today. The two varieties

not only have structural variations at different linguistic levels (such as phonological, grammatical, lexical etc.) but also the functional variations in the use of language in different socio-cultural domains and settings such as education, administration, mass media, science and technology, home language and so on. That is, each variety has different sets of social functions both in the formal and informal levels.

Hence, the spoken language of Tamil shows a number of variations conditioned by different social parameters including the geographical distribution of dialects. The social stratification of spoken Tamil and its dialects in a way helps one to identify the '*common core*' and '*overall pattern*' of language structure. That is, in spite of the variations found in the actual use of language one could have observed the existence of a standard variety of spoken Tamil with which most speakers feel comfortable. Also, the study of '*discreteness*' and '*continuity*' in Tamil dialects reflect this kind of existence (Karunakaran, K. 2005).

The two varieties do not overlap or merge much in the modern use but for the movie language which now employs mostly the spoken language or dialectal usages especially stretching from the late 1960s. In dialogues and conversations between or among the characters in novels and short stories in modern literature as well as in some of the socio-cultural usages in different writings. Hence, the functional roles of these two distinct varieties are not only defined clearly but also well maintained in the use of modern Tamil in different domains as mentioned above.

In addition to this there are certain attitudes of the language users associated with the use of the so called low variety or spoken variety which is still considered as a kind of less prestigious one for formal use. This kind of differences and attitudes are purely

based on the functional significance enjoyed by the written and spoken varieties in the day to day language use, or in other words the 'the high status given' to the so called high variety namely written literary Tamil in formal or formalised use of the language.

1.2 A Brief History of Tamil Novels

Though the history of Tamil novels can be traced only during the European era, the history of Tamil can be traced back to 3rd century B.C. The historicity of Tamil language can be divided broadly into three periods: (i) Ancient Tamil (3rd Century B.C. – 500 A.D), (ii) Medieval Tamil (500 A.D. – 1600 A.D.) and (iii) Modern Tamil 1600 A.D. – until now.

The ancient Tamil was called *Cankat Tamil* and during this period Tamil was written in the poetic form and it was understood only by learned people and Tamil pandits. During the medieval period South India was ruled by the Pallavars and Naickers. The Tamil language absorbed a number of loanwords from other languages such as Urdu (Perso-Arabic) and Sanskrit(Indo-Aryan). Sanskrit was considered as the ancient among the Indo-Aryan and so one can find Sanskrit usages in almost all the Indian languages.

With the advent of the Europeans to South India in the seventeenth century, Tamil literature slowly underwent tremendous changes both in form and use. The Europeans who came to South India to spread Christianity, learnt Tamil and started to write articles in simple Tamil prose. They also produced grammars, dictionaries, materials for teaching Tamil as well as translation of literary works into European languages. They used printing machines which caused tremendous change in Tamil writings. Tamil language and poems became simpler and education was made available for everybody. As a result new forms of written Tamil such as novels and short stories emerged with

the aim to fulfil the needs of the common people and added to the existing stock of Tamil literature.

The novel is a new form in Tamil literature. The first Tamil novel was written by Vethanayakam Pillai in 1876. He was a district judge and master of both Tamil and the English language. After reading English novels given by his English friends, he wanted to disseminate his views through stories to the Tamil people. He wrote his first novel entitled, '*Pratapa Mudaliyar Carittiram*' (*The History of Pratapa Mudaliyar*). His second novel '*Sugunasundari*' (*name of a lady*) was published in 1887. Numerous other Tamil writers were emerged following his footsteps. At the beginning, most of the novels were written based on the English and Sanskrit stories.

However, Tamil novels slowly started to perform the valuable social function of recording information and transmitting it to the readers. Since novels reflect the real social life by illustrating the basic social and linguistic features more and more common people took interest in reading the novels. In view of this demand many writers came forward to write novels in Tamil by selecting simple social themes pertaining to Tamil society in Malaysia. This trend though started in Tamilnadu, quickly spread to Malaysia too.

1.3 A Brief History of Tamil Novels in Malaysia

The history of Malaysian novels began in 1916 when the first Tamil novel was published in Malaysia (Sabapathy, 1995). More than one hundred and fifty novels have been published by local writers since then. With all the characteristic features of the Tamil Language explained above when we look at the novels written in Malaysia, one can identify a unique language being developed. It may be noted that the Tamil novels are written exclusively in the Malay linguistic, social, ethnic and cultural environment where three linguistic communities viz., Tamils, Malays and Chinese co- exist.

During the period of varying ethnic, linguistic co-existence the Tamil language in Malaysia has undergone a lot of changes linguistically which are very obvious in the writings of local writers. Tamil has assimilated with the local cultures and languages: it has borrowed words from the Malay language and other linguistic elements such as, suffixes, empty forms etc. from other languages. Apart from this the phenomenon of code-switching and use of new coinage of words are distinctly seen in Tamil novels and short stories (Maniyarasan,2010). Also, the usage of linguistic elements varies from one writer to another writer. These features are clearly seen when we critically read the Tamil novels written and published in Malaysia.

However, this needs a thorough academic investigation in order to find out the nature and structure of the Tamil language used in Malaysian novels. Generally papers have been presented in literary seminars on critical analysis of modern literature - novels and short stories. They however, do not discuss how the Tamil linguistic elements are used in Tamil by the writers. Hence, the current research will be a pioneering one in this area as the researcher plans to investigate the use of stylistic features reflected

through the Tamil novels. However, the present study is restricted to the four novels produced by one of the famous local novelists by name Re. Karthigesu.*

The Malaysian Tamil Novels have a history of more than ninety years. The first Tamil novel in this country was published in 1916. In the beginning Tamil novels were written by Tamils who migrated to Malaysia either from Tamil Nadu (South India) or from Sri Lanka. These writers had their basic Tamil education in their motherland. They came to Malaya to earn a living. The themes of their writings were mostly related to their motherland. The characters and locations chosen also reflected the South Indian or Sri Lankan social situations and contexts .

Later the Japanese occupation and emergency rule (1945) in Malaya provided local writers some interesting insights to write stories with varying themes. They started to use local characters and places, and social issues in their stories. From 1949, a new trend was seen in the Malaysian Tamil novel writing. The writers who were born in Malaysia considered Malaysia as their motherland and showed their patriotism in their writings as well.

According to Sababathy (1995:22), around twenty three Tamil novels were published in Malaya before the independence . Among these novels eight were first published as serials in the Tamil dailies. Most of these novels were detective stories based on the detective novels published in Tamilnadu(India). They were written just to maintain the language use and fulfil the enthusiasm of the Tamil readers' at that period of time.

(* *va:nattu ve:lihaL* (1981), *te:Tiyirukkum taruNangaL*(1993),*antima ka:lam*(1998) and *su:ta:TTam a:Tum ka:lam* (2005))

However, after the independence (in 1957) the Malayan Education System was revamped to a greater extent. Primary education was given free to school children in the pupil's mother tongue, by the government. Many Tamil schools were started in the country. This increased gradually the number of Tamil readers in the country. As a result, after the independence a new impetus was seen in the domain of Tamil novels in Malaya (Sababathy, 1995). Thereafter creative writers entered into the field and started producing new creations. More than one hundred novels were published in Malaysia after the independence with various themes based on social, political and economic issues of the Tamil society in local environment.

1.4 Research in Tamil Novels Abroad and in Malaysia

About ninety three researches have been carried out on Tamil novels on various titles abroad and there is just only one research available about the Malaysian Tamil novels in Malaysia carried out by Sababathy (1995). (Web pages of Tamil Electronic Library (c) K. Kalyanasundaram). These studies are mainly literature based.

According to Devapopathy (cited in Sababathy,1995:viii), although in Malaysia novelists continued to produce their creative works in varying quantities and qualities, these have not been studied or evaluated systematically in depth except for two detailed studies carried out by Sababathy. He submitted a thesis entitled, 'Early Malaysian Tamil Novels 1910-1960' for his Master of Arts Degree to the University of Malaya. This study was based on seven Tamil novels published in Malaya during that period.

Later in the year 1995, Sababathy did a detailed study of Tamil novels written after the independence in Malaysia for his Ph.D. dissertation. In this thesis there is a chapter on the styles of different creative writers with relevant illustrations.

1.5 Definition and Development of Stylistics

The study of language use (including different kinds of usages) in various contexts, either linguistic or situational is called stylistics. Yet, it seems that due to the complex history and variety of investigated issues of this study, it is difficult to state precisely what stylistics is, and to mark clear boundaries between it and other branches of study which deal with text analysis. Geoffrey N. Leech (1981:13) defines , stylistics as the linguistic study of style, and simply as an exercise in describing *what* use is made of language.

By and large, it is an approach used to analyse the literary texts using linguistic structures and descriptions. In other words, *stylistics* analyses the distinctive linguistic expression and the description of its purpose and effect. It describes from linguist's point of view that why an author chooses a word, a phrase or a sentence in a particular way in a text. But, a literary critic will analyse how the aesthetic effect is brought out through language by an author.

Charles Bally (in Hough, 1968), one of the founding fathers of modern stylistics, defined it as the study of the **affective** elements in language – these **affective** elements being conceived as optimal addition to an already determined meaning. By and large, a novelist is aware of fictional characters and situations in life without any thought of their linguistic presentation. Most of the writings involve a process of revision,

conducted in the mind before putting on papers. Different writers look on this revising process from different perspectives; some see it as the progressively more accurate embodiment of a preconceived meaning. Some see it as a continuous change and modification of meaning. So, when a novelist accomplishes his job it is a whole composed of linguistic elements that we also know in other combinations. A word in a particular line of a poem or a phrase in a novel which may denote a magical meaning may be quite inert in a different sentence. As such, a construction of linguistic elements in one context may serve a powerful expressive purpose. It is with this phenomenon, that the study of style or stylistics is concerned with our philosophy of meaning or theory about the psychology of the creative process.

So, stylistics is actually a description of various linguistic forms found in a language use and style is a concept that is used traditionally as a deviation from an established norm in the literary language. Stylistics is a part of literary criticism and not of linguistics. As such it goes beyond consideration of language and beyond description and analysis into evaluation (Suresh Kumar, 1988).

While Block (1993) defines style as the message carried out by the frequency distribution and transitional probabilities of [a discourse] linguistic features, especially when they differ from those of the same features in language as a whole. This definition shows to a certain extent the difference between the elements used in stylistics, literary criticism and linguistics.

On the other hand, Hockett (as cited in Hough, 1968), asserts that two utterances in the same language which convey approximately two similar meanings or information but in the different linguistic structures can be said to differ in style. So, here we can deduce

that the differences between synonymous sentences may then be called stylistics. So, stylistics is a part of meaning, and a part which can properly and reasonably be discussed on its own. By and large, stylistics can also be said to be the study of style used in literary and verbal language use. Stylistic studies usually attempt to explain the particular choice of language use made by an author based on the subject matter in the language sense. It can be said to be the best means to express a predetermined subject matter.

Stylistics enables us to identify and examine the distinctive features of literary texts and to specify the generic and structural sub-divisions of literature. Stylistics will show us how to distinguish the constituent parts of a literary text and enable us to document their operations, but in doing so it must draw upon the terminology and methodology of disciplines, which focus upon language in the real world (Bradford, 1997).

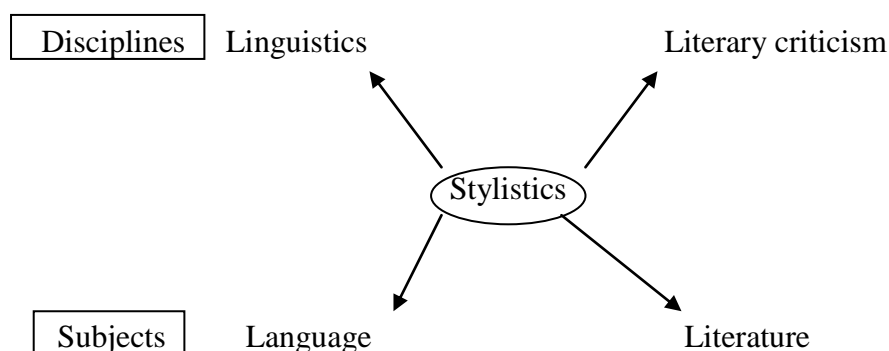
Stylistics is also studied as a branch of linguistics which analyses the characteristics of situations and the different use of language in literary works. It also attempts to establish principles capable of explaining for the particular choices of language use made by different writers. Curtis Wiltayes says that the study of stylistics is primarily concerned with the examination of written language and being so, style may be defined as a characteristic, habitual and recurrent use of the transformational apparatus of language in [Freeman(ed.),1970].

Like many others, Chapman (1973) also contends that the linguistic study of different styles in language use is called stylistics because 'style' has a close relationship with stylistics. But, in literature stylistics acts as a method of analysis that provides linguistic terms to discuss and support the views that the texts may have (Simpson, 1993). So,

stylistics is the same as an approach to language that queries all those linguistic practices and conversations that are normally taken for granted.

In general, modern stylistics uses its analytical power from the analytical methods and descriptive intentions of linguistics. Meanwhile, modern literary stylistics in particular, draws upon those areas and adds to the interpretative goals of modern literary criticism (Catana,1997). In both cases, the use of linguistic methodology has allowed stylistics to move beyond earlier normative and presumptive description of 'correct' styles to a further analysis of language itself and the purpose to which language is regularly put (Catana,1997). Catana further says that style is seen as an expression of a particular psychological, social or historical sensibility or moment rather than as a general property of a particular language.

Stylistics can also be seen as a study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation. This distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism. It is essentially a means of linking the two and has no autonomous domain of its own. As a matter of fact, stylistics involves both literary criticism and linguistics, as its morphological make-up suggests: the 'style' component relating it to the former and the 'istics' component to the latter (Widdowson,1975). The diagram below shows the fact that stylistics is neither a discipline nor a subject in its own right, but a means of relating disciplines and subjects.



The use of linguistic procedures thus offered both an affinity with an established discipline and the possibility of founding the description and interpretation of style upon the bedrock of science (Catana, 1997).

One of the main functions of early stylistics was to explain how the 'meaning' of a text was created through the writer's linguistic choices. In the past, the 'meaning' of a given text is of less concern to the reader than it has been to the stylisticians because of the development in theories about how we interpret language. Stylisticians tended to treat meaning as though it '**resided in the text**' that is to say, all we have to do is to read and understand the text thoroughly. Stylistic description such as that only provides analysis of the '**ultimate**' or '**essential**' meaning of the text.

Thus, stylisticians are now less anxious to find out what a text means (although stylistic analysis may help one to find meanings in a text which he or she would otherwise have missed). Instead we are more interested in the systematic ways language is used to create a text which are similar or different from one another, and we also link choices, in texts and cultural context (Thornborrow, 1998).

Thornborrow (1998) further explains that we have departed from traditional stylistics in two significant ways. Firstly, he says that we have incorporated contemporary linguistic theories about the process of reading and interpretation into our analytical models. The second significant way in which we have departed from traditional stylistics is to have included quite a lot of information about what the constituent parts of language are (i.e. the pieces with which it is made up of) and what the 'rules' are for the ways in which they can be combined. To do this, we have drawn on general linguistic models of

phonology, morphology, syntax and discourse, which are not unique to stylistics but found in linguistic analysis in many ways.

Subsequently, modern stylistics is caught between two disciplinary imperatives. On the one hand it raises questions regarding the relation between the way that language is used and its apparent context an objective language as an active element of the real world. On the other hand, it seeks to define the particular use of linguistic structure to create facsimiles, models or distortions of real world - literary language (Bradford, 1997).

So, stylistic analysis is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language. All writers, and for that matter, all texts, have their individual qualities. Therefore the features which recommend themselves in one text will not necessarily be important in another text by the same or different author. There is no infallible technique for selecting what is significant. We have to make ourselves newly aware, for each text, of the artistic effect of the whole, and the way linguistic details fit into this whole.

1.6 The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Language mobilizes mankind in all aspects to achieve tremendous progress. Man communicates with each other using language. This may happen in various forms, for example in writing man communicates with the society through his essays, news, novels or poems. Each form of writing or communication has its unique style of presentation and depicts various language structures. In these structures sometimes, occur changes and variations, especially in developed languages such as, Tamil, Arabic, Chinese and English where there is abundant literary production.

Generally when anybody thinks about the language structures often it includes phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic features of the language, their various alterations and functions during active discourse. Some of the linguistic elements maintain the same form in all the places they appear; but some elements are found in more than one form in different language structures. In some languages a particular form denotes only a particular message or meaning, and in some other languages there may be more than one form to denote one meaning. For example in Tamil language a morpheme may convey many meanings (example:**a:Ru** means ‘ river, number six, be patient, cool down’) and many morphemes may convey one particular meaning (example : (‘*appa;*, *tantai*, *tahappan* meaning ‘father’). This structure is also found in the dialects of a language. This phenomenon is observed among the writers of the modern languages. Combination of these various forms and structures in a language is known as language style. According to Howard S. Babb (1971:3):

Language is imagined as the ‘dress’ and thus to some degree distinct from thought, with the speaker first deciding what he wants to express and then seeking, among the alternative possibilities the most effective way in which to express it.

He further asserts that,

For instance the concept of choice, which appears normally to mean deciding on one among alternative ways of saying the same thing, is frequently evoked, perhaps partly as an acknowledgement of the literary artists freedom, but mainly in the belief that the artist definitively reveals his individuality in his style through the particular choices he makes. (ibid).

As such, style varies among writers and helps to convey the intended message accordingly. It also helps to identify the types of writers; and it also enhances the skills of a writer in subtly transmitting a message or thought. Thus style is simply the order one gives to one’s thoughts.

The language elements which a writer chooses also depends on the situation, time, and place of writing. In addition to these features, the background of the society which is going to receive the message and the ability of the writer to handle the language elements in a language structure also plays a vital part in a message. Sometimes the type of literary product or style also determines the choice of language elements in a language structure. As a matter of fact all the language structures selected by a writer helps the reader to understand a message clearly. For instance, a speech or a literary product for a well educated society will be different compared to the common people. Consequently we can see many styles in the usage of a language based on the needs of the society and the objectives of the writer or speaker. The dialects of a language also determine the styles of a language. In fields such as sociolinguistics, literature, psychology, anthropology, mass media, etc. there are certain principles and expressions which help to explain the styles in a language more precisely.

By and large, a novelist is aware of fictional characters and situations in life without giving any thought of their linguistic presentation. Most writing involves a process of revision, conducted in the mind before putting on paper. Different writers look on this revising process from different perspectives. As Hough (1968:11) states, “some see it as the progressively more accurate embodiment of a preconceived meaning”. Some see it as a continuous change and modification of meaning itself. So, when a novelist accomplishes his job, he thinks that the whole product is a composition of linguistic elements that found place in other contexts as well. A word in a particular line of a poem or a phrase in a novel that may denote a magical meaning may be quite inert in a different sentence. As such, a construction of linguistic elements in one context may

serve a powerful expressive purpose. It is with this phenomenon that the study of style or stylistics is concerned.

In this study the researcher intends to analyse the Tamil language as it is used in four Malaysian novels: *va:nattu ve:lihaL(1981)*, *te:Tiyirukkum taruNangaL(1993)*, *antima ka:lam(1998)* and *su:ta:TTam a:Tum ka:lam (2005)* written by a Malaysian literary writer Re. Karthigesu , with a view to find out the functional reasons for the features that characterize or permeate this language variety. Re. Karthigesu's novels are chosen for this study because he has extensively discussed the social network and interactions in different environments. Since the author is a native speaker of Tamil and citizen of Malaysia he had revealed certain intricate features of Malaysian Tamil language and the changing culture of the Malaysian Tamils due to several reasons. *antima ka:lam(1998)* one of his novels has won the Manikavasagam Book Prize (1998). Re.Karthigesu has also published three anthologies of Tamil short stories. The main objectives of the study are to identify and describe the stylistic devices used by Re.Karthigesu in his novels. Another objective is to seek possible relationship between them and the context of use of these devices.

1.7 Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following questions:

- 1.7.1 What are the themes and messages conveyed by the novels *va:nattu ve:lihaL (1981)*, *te:Tiyirukkum taruNangaL(1993)*, *antima ka:lam(1998)* and *su:ta:TTam a:Tum ka:lam (2005)* written by Re.Karthigesu?
- 1.7.2 What are the stylistics devices used by the author in these novels?
- 1.7.3 What are the probable relationships between the stylistic devices and the contexts of use of these devices?

1.8 The Significance of the Study

Malaysian novels often reflect multilingual, multi ethnic and multicultural aspects found in the country. These heterogeneities are seen in the use of several cultural terminologies, and language embedding in various sociolinguistic discourses. The novels selected for the present study are not an exception to this kind of language use. A lot of linguistic variations have been observed in the Tamil novels written and published in Malaysia. As per the knowledge of the researcher, the style of Malaysian Tamil novels has not been analysed so far by keeping in mind the stylistics of language structure and language use in correlation.

This study vividly gives an account of language and its style used in Malaysian writers' perspective. This study may also throw some light to new writers to make use of the Tamil language more precisely and eloquently.

Pedagogically this study is more useful in the sense that various intricate stylistic features that the author has used to expose the unique features of the characters of these novels are brought out systematically. Such linguistic expositions always have socio cultural and environmental conditioning. This information will be useful for the students to identify and study the writing process of the author while creating a story. Further, this will inculcate the practice of creativity among the students.

This study may also help to lay a solid base for future *stylistic studies* in Tamil language because understanding certain constructs are quite imperative for the researchers. Besides, this study can also be useful to formulate syllabus for an elective course in Teacher Training Institutions and Universities.

1.9 The Scope and Organisation of the Study

This is an exploratory study limited to linguistic manifestations rather than the study of mere literary language of the four selected novels of Re.Karthigesu. Keeping in mind the objectives of this study, the researcher has analyzed critically the language used by different characters of the novels which shows various sociolinguistic, and cultural attestations reflected through the linguistic discourse in the novel. As linguistics orientated stylistic studies were not accomplished in detail with reference to Tamil, the present researcher has tried his best to make use of all these published research materials on Tamil linguistic stylistics, as well as those available stylistic studies in English and Malay language. With these limitations in mind the researcher could successfully derive a theoretical framework which is found suitable to analyse the data meant for a stylistic study.

1.9.1 Organization and Presentation of the Thesis

This thesis presentation is divided into seven chapters as given below:

Chapter 1

The first chapter explains the objectives and the overall format of this study in an explicit and well formalised way.

Chapter 2

The chapter II discusses in detail the theories related to stylistics and linguistics. Further, in this chapter various models which are suggested by various scholars to analyse the stylistic concepts of literature and language are discussed. This chapter also explores further to identify the suitable framework among all others to process and analyse the data collected for the present study.

Chapter 3

This chapter discusses in detail the identified theoretical concepts namely the text linguistic approach, the discourse model and general stylistic approach for analysing the data collected for the present study.

Chapter 4

In this chapter the data collected from the four novels are analysed with reference to the language used by the author in narrations, conversations, , turn-takings during conversation, aspect of politeness analytically from the linguistic point of view. Phonological and morphological reductions, use of syntactic features and lexical usages of the author are also discussed with relevant illustrations.

Chapter 5

This chapter discusses the language style of the author from the sociolinguistic perspective based on speech acts, soliloquy, non - verbal communication and communication brought out through letters (as in letter - writing) .

Chapter 6

The use of rhetorics by Re. Karthigesus's in his novels as a device is discussed in this chapter. Adoption of poetic features from other literary books, figurative language use such as : simile, metaphor, analogy and metonymy are also discussed with relevant examples drawn from the novels.

Chapter 7

This chapter presents the significance of the findings and observations made as a result of this study. It also points out the need and scope for future studies in the domain of Tamil stylistics.