

Assignment 3

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Language: Tamil

1)

All languages exhibit internal variation, that is, each language exists in a number of varieties and is in one sense the sum of those varieties. We use the term **variety** as a general term for a way of speaking; this may be something as broad as Standard English, a variety defined in terms of location and social class, such as lower-class New York City speech.

For some it is easy to differentiate between the two (say, I speak Tamil, or I speak Cantonese, etc) but for others, not so much. For instance, Census-takers in India find themselves confronted with an array of language names when they ask people what language(s) they speak. Names are not only ascribed by **region**, which is what we might expect, but sometimes also by **caste, religion, village**, and so on. Moreover, they can change from census to census as the political and social climate of the country changes.

Haugen (1966) has pointed out that language and dialect are ambiguous terms. Although ordinary people use these terms quite freely in speech, for them a dialect is almost certainly no more than a **local non-prestigious** (therefore powerless) variety of a 'real' language. In contrast, scholars may experience considerable difficulty in deciding whether one term should be used rather than the other in certain situations. Now, our question is how do **sociolinguists** then define this difference between a dialect and a language?

Historically, the word 'language' is used to refer either to a **single linguistic norm** or to a group of related norms, and 'dialect' is used to refer to **one of the norms**. A related set of terms which brings in additional criteria for distinction is the relationship between what the French call **un dialecte and un patois**. The former is a regional variety of a language that has an associated literary tradition, whereas the latter is a regional variety that lacks such a literary tradition. Even a language like Breton, a Celtic language still spoken in parts of Brittany, is called a patois because it lacks a strong literary, tradition and it is not some country's language.

Although we see many different relationships between many languages and dialects, what remains constant amongst them are the concepts of **power and solidarity**, be it case of politics, monarchy, fighting for freedom, fighting for separation, unity amongst religion, etc. A language has more power than any of its dialects, and it has become so because of these non-linguistic reasons.

Dialect is sometimes used only if there is a strong tradition of **writing** in the local variety. Old English and to a lesser extent Middle English had dialects in this sense. The term dialect can also be used to describe differences in speech associated with various **social groups** or classes, such as, occupation, place of residence, education, 'new' versus 'old' money, income, racial or ethnic origin, cultural background, caste, religion.

If we were to apply **Bells' criteria** (standardization, vitality, historicity, autonomy, reduction, mixture, and de facto norms) to differentiate between varieties, we may realize that not every variety we may want to call a language has the same status as every other variety. They are all equals as languages, but that does not necessarily mean that **all languages are equal**! The first is a linguistic judgment, the second a social one.

Hence, we may state that all varieties are dialects, linguistically. But socially, there is one such variety which gets a socio-political importance due to various factors.

2)

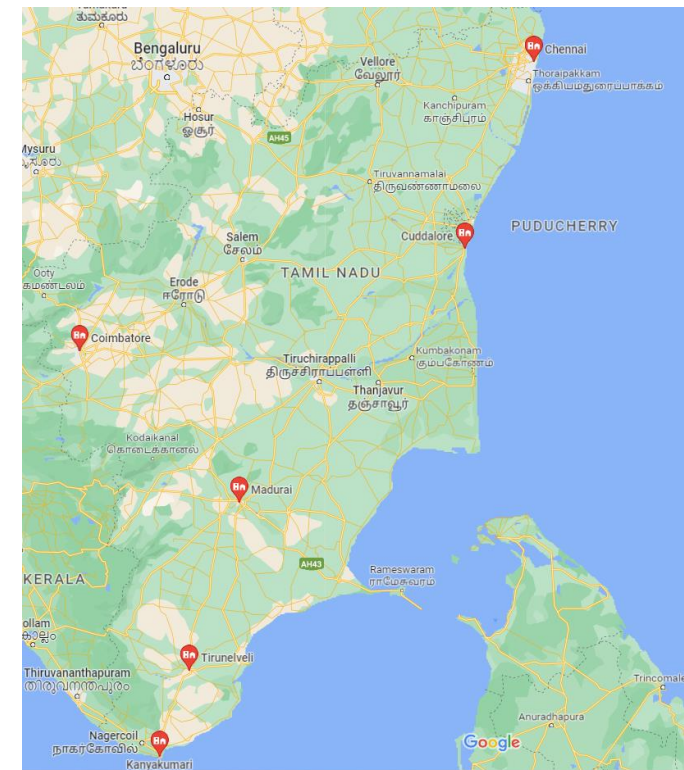
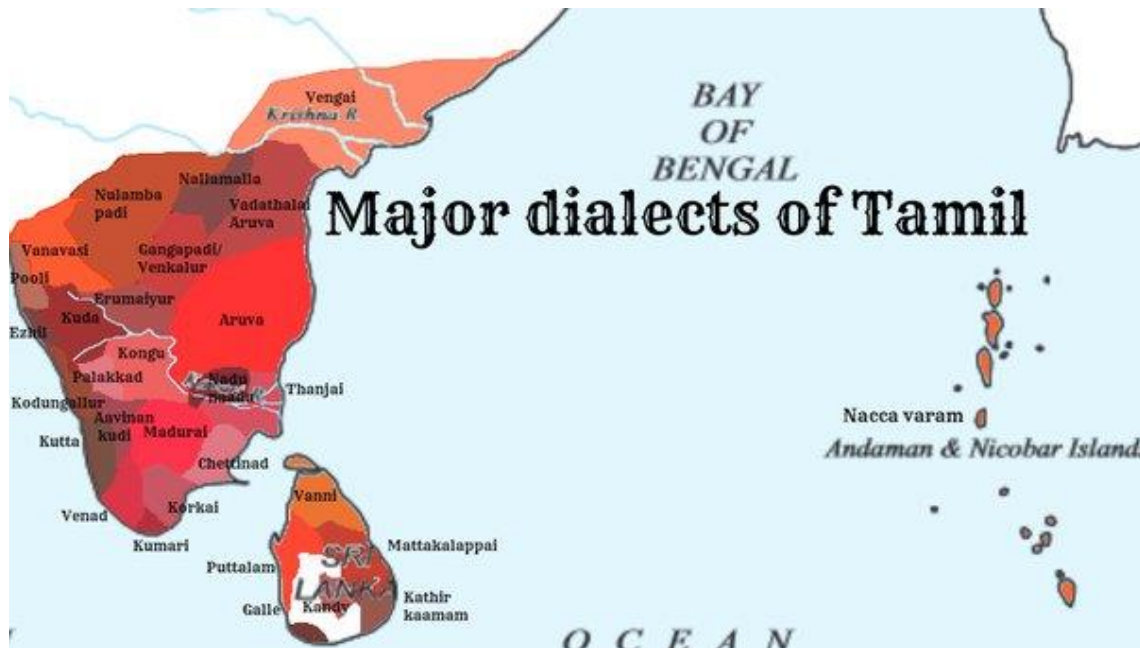
First, dialects in Tamil are not separate languages; among native Tamil speakers the various dialects are mutually intelligible, differing mainly in intonation, speed of delivery and vocabulary. In general, while native Tamil speakers have an overall understanding of dialects, this understanding lacks depth.

Secondly, Tamil is a diglossic language, in which the spoken is quite different from the written. We encounter Tamil dialects mostly orally.

Now say we are following the life story of a man who has lived in many parts of the state and shifted as many times and has grown up between different social class rankings. His mind is structured with stereotypes by which he identifies people of different regions and their dialects: Nagarkovil Tamil with its ennapove, Tirunelveli Tamil with its etti and elei, Coimbatore Tamil with its usual -nka marker of respect, the verb potu which is used as an auxiliary with almost any word, Tanjavur Tamil with its empalatu ("eighty", enpatu), Arcot Tamil with its isu ("pull", ilu), Madurai Tamil with its ankittu inkittu ("here and there"), Madras- Chennai Tamil with its Inna, Innamme, kisanai, nasta ("kerosene", "breakfast - tiffin"), universal lack of respect in addressing people (considered to be the least respectful of all the Tamil dialects), Palghat Tamil with its atippan ("I'll beat you", atippen), kettiyo Mysore Tamil with its auto pannintu ponko (for "Please take an auto rickshaw"), Sri Lankan

Tamil with its distinct drawl and vocabulary (mostly heard through Ceylon Radio), Brahmin Tamil with its connel, ceyvel, varuvel, Vaishnava Brahmin Tamil with its cattamutu, tirukkannamutu (“rasam”, “payacam”), the list goes on and on.

Tamil has majorly 6 regional dialects. Today we shall look closely at the dialects of Madiye Tamizh (Central – Cuddalore, etc), Madras Tamizh (chennai), Nellai Tamizh (Tirunelveli), Madurai Tamizh (Madurai), Kongu Tamizh (Kaniyakumari). We shall treat Madiye Tamizh as the standard variety and the rest as comparison dialects.



These distinctions are much more clearly visible in the link below:

<https://goo.gl/maps/gWEwmPfTUm4tHQDe8>

	Central Variety (Madiye Tamizh)	Madras Variety (Madras Tamizh)	
1	Piragu selvuma?	Appuramagu selvuma?	Should we go later?
	pirYaku ceVlvomA	appurYamAka povomA	
2	Ange selvuma?	Annāṇḍa selvuma?	Should we go there?
	afke ceVlvomA	anYnYANta povomA	
3	Nan Kopamaka irukkiren.	Nan gandaka irukkiren	I am angry.
	nAnY kopamAka irukkirYenY	nAnY kANta irukkenY	
4	Nīṅkaḷ avarai ēmārṛukirīrkaḷ	Nee avarai dabaikirirkal	You are fooling him.
	nIfkaḷY avarE emArYrYukirYIrkaḷY	nI avarE tapAykirYa	
5	Veetula sollitu vanthiya	Vootla soltu vanthiya	Have you told at home?
	vIttula coVllittu vanwiyA	vUttula coVllittu vanwiyA	
6	Vettiduvēn	Kaima paniruvēn	Will chop you.
	veVttituvēnY	kEmA paNNiruvēnY	
7	Engai vutkaru	Enga kundu	He is angry.
	ifka utkAru	ifka kunwu	
8	Avan epothum kindal seivan	Avan epothum kalachikitu erupan	He always teases others
	avanY eVppowum kiNtal ceVyvAnY	avanY eVppowum kalAccittu iruppAnY	
9	Evan santhosama ponan	Evan ghujala ponan	He went happily
	avanY canwoRamA ponYAnY	ivanY kujAlA ponYAnY	
10	Ethu nalla eruku	Ethu sokka eruku	This is nice
	iwu nalla irukku	iwu cokkA irukku	
11	Naatram adikirathu	Gabbu adikithu	Smells bad
	nArYrYam atikkirYawu	kappu atikkuwu	
12	Amithiya utkaru	Gammunu kundu	Sit still
	amEwiyA utkAr	kammunYnYu kunwu	

	Central Variety (Madiye Tamizh)	Tirunelveli Variety (Nellai Tamizh)	
13	Yeppadi irukinga?	Yeppadi irukkeeya?	How are you? (With respect)
	eVppati irukkIfka	eVppati irukkiya	
14	Savkiyama irukinga?	Chuvamaa Irukeyal	Are you doing well? (With respect)
	cavukkiyamA irukkIfkaYA	cuvamA irukkiyaA	
15	Savkiyama?	Chuvamthaana?	Are you doing well?
	cavukkiyamA	cuvamwAnYA	
16	Thoorama poriya?	Thoorama?	Are you going somewhere (far)?
	wUramA porYiyA	wUramA	
17	Naan solurain	Naa Cholludhamla	I am telling you (Without respect)
	nAnY coVllurYenY	nA coVlluwAmla	
18	Avan soluran	Aveyn Cholludhamle	He is telling.
	avanY coVllurYAnY	aviyanY coVlluwAmla	
19	Enga polam?	Engana polam?	Where do you want to go?
	eVfka polAm	eVfkanYa polAm	
20	Ingakita variya?	Inganakula variya?	Can you come near here?
	ifka variyA	ifkanYakulYIYa variyA	
21	Angakita poriya?	Anganakula poriya?	Can you go there?
	afka porYiyA	afkanYakkulYIYa porYiyA	
22	Tirutu pasanghala	Kalavani payalughla	Thief
	wiruttu pacafkaYA	kaYavANi pacafkaYA	
23	Eppadi erukinga annan	Yeppadi irukkeeya annaachi	How, are you brother?
	eVppati irukkIfka aNNanY	yeVpti irukkIya aNNAcci	
24	Velaiku poitu varen	Choliku poren	Going for work!
	veIEkku poyittu varenY	colYikku porYenY	

	Central Variety (Madiye Tamizh)	Madurai Variety (Madurai Variety)	
25	Maturai oru periya nakaram	Marutha oru periya nakaram	Madurai is a huge city
	mawurE oVru peVriya nakaram	marYuwa oVru peVriya nakaram	
26	Evvaḷavu?	Embuttu?	How much?
	eVvvaḷYavu	eVmputtu	
27	Cariyāka pēcu	vyekyanama pesu	Speak clearly!
	cariyAka pecu	vlyAkkAnYamA pecu	
28	Atu oru kalappai	Atu oru mundakalappa	That is a plough.
	awu oVru kalappE	awu oVru muNtakalappa	
29	Utkarntu oyvetu	Patraya podu	Sit and relax!
	utkArnwu oyveVtufkaḷ	patrYEya potu	
30	Kavanittu poitu va	Kolara poitu va	Take care
	kavanYiwwu poyittu vA	kolArA poyittu vA	
31	Poy collātē	Roota kodukatha	Don't tell lies
	poVy coVIlAwe	rUtta kutukkAwa	
32	Tittuvanga	Vaiya porainga	They will scold
	wittuvArka	vEyyaporYAYfka	
33	payappatatha	paelatha	Don't fear.
	payappatawa	pelAwa	
34	Ithiku mattume, cappittom	Athukaandithaan cappittom	For that only, we ate.
	iwarYku mattume cAppittom.	iwukANtiwAnY cAppittom.	
35	Akkā, nī eṇṇa ceykirāy?	Yekkah, ni enna ceykiray?	Sister (older), what are you doing?
	akka, nI eVnYnYa ceVykirYAY?	eVkkoy, nI eVnYnYa ceVykirYAY?	
36	Anna, pokalama?	Yenney, pokalama?	Brother (older), shall we go?
	aNNA, nAm pokalAmA?	aNNe, nAm pokalAmA?	
37	Kavaṇamāka iru	Soodhanama iru	Be careful
	kavanYamAka iru	cUwAnYamA iru	

38	Makkalam engga poranga	Sanangalaam engga poranga	Where people are going
	makkalYeVIIAm eVfka porYAfka	canYafkalYeVIIAm eVfka porYAfka	
39	Kuzanthaya thitathinga	Pilliya Viathinga	Don't scold the child
	kulYYanwEyE wittAwifka	pilYIYEyE vEyAwifka	
40	Kanna pinnanu pesathey	Kundaka manadakanu pesathey	Don't talk irrelevant
	kanYnYA pinYnYAnYu pecAwifka	kuNtAkamaNtakanYu pecAwifka	
41	Cyclea thiruditan	Cyclea attaya potitan	He stole the cycle
	cEkkilYa wirutittAnY	cEkkilYa AttEyE pottuttAnY	
42	Meduva poo	Payaa poo	Go slow
	meVwuvA po	pEya po	
43	Mela vai	Osaka vai	Place on the top
	mela vE	oVcakka vE	
44	Ingha enna panra	Ingittu enna seyara?	What are doing here?
	ifka eVnYnYa paNrYa	ifkakittu eVnYnYa ceVyyarYa	
45	Angha poi vai	Angittu poi vai?	Keep it there?
	afka poy vE	afkittu poy vE	
46	Ethu evaluvu kasu	Ethu embuttu	This is how much
	iwu eVvvulYavu	iwu eVmputtu	

	Central Variety (Madiye Tamizh)	Coimbatore Variety (Kongu Tamizh)	
47	Patti vandu erukanga	Aaya vandu erukanga	Grandmother has come
	pAtti vanwirukkAfka	AyA vanwirukkAfka	
48	Yaru avanga	Arru avinga	Who are they?
	yAru avafka	Aru avifka	
49	Rathiriku enna sapadu	Anthiku enna sapadunga	What is the dinner?
	rAwwirikku eVnYnYa cAppAtu	anwikku eVnYnYa cAppAtu	
50	Avarku Ehapata sotthu eruku	Avingaluku Urupatta sothu erukunga	He has lot of property.

	avarukku ekappatta coVwwu irukku	avifkaYukku Urppatta coVwwu irukku	
51	Ennoda penna	Enra penna	My pen
	eVnYnYota penYA	eVnYrYa penYA	
52	Pinnala nilu	Purangala nilu	Stand on back
	pinYnYAla nillu	purYawwila nillu	
52	Namma onna polam	Angittu poi vai?	We can go together.
	namma oVnYnYA polAm	namma oVttukka polAm	
53	Vyarvaiya eruku	Upsama eruku	Feeling like sweating
	viyarvEyA irukku	uppucamA irukku	
54	Evarkal nam sonthakararkal	Evika nama urampiranga	They are our relatives.
	ivarkalY nam coVnwakkArarkalY	ivika namma urampirafka	
55	Yaru avar	Aaru avar	Who is he
	yAru avar	Aru avar	

Analysis:

The socio-linguistic situation of Tamil is characterised by diglossia: there are two separate registers varying by social status, a high register and a low one. Tamil dialects are primarily differentiated from each other by the fact that they have undergone different phonological changes and sound shifts in evolving from Old Tamil.

For example, the word for “here”—in̄ku in Centamil (the classic variety)—has evolved into in̄kū in the Kongu dialect of Coimbatore, inga in the dialect of Thanjavur, and in̄kai in some dialects of Sri Lanka.

Old Tamil’s in̄kaṇ (where kaṇ means place) is the source of in̄kane in the dialect of Tirunelveli, Old Tamil in̄kaṭṭu is the source of in̄kuṭṭu in the dialect of Madurai, and in̄kaṭe in various northern dialects.

Let us first look at each of the dialects separately.

Central Tamil dialect is considered to be one of the purest forms of spoken Tamil along with Madurai Tamil and is considered to be the basis of the standard spoken in the state. It is spoken in Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli (Trichy), Cuddalore, etc.

Madurai Tamil is spoken in the city of Madurai and a vast geographical area of South Tamil Nadu, that was once ruled by the Pandiya Kings. This although differs from the Nellai variety which was also spoken in a region ruled by the Pandiyas.

Nellai Tamil is spoken over the regions of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi regions of southern Tamil Nadu.

Madras Tamil or Madras Bashai is a colloquial slang of Tamil language spoken in the city of Chennai. It is a loose polyglot blend of Tamil and English, with loanwords from Telugu, Kannada, Hindi and Urdu.

Kongu Tamil is a dialect spoken by people belonging to the caste of Gounder. This dialect is widely spoken around the regions of Coimbatore, Tripur, Salem, Karur, and Erode.

Now when we compare our main standard (central Tamizh) with the variety of Chennai we see that the intonations of the central varieties are much more respectful even in informal situations. Since Chennai is a city hotspot with huge migrant populations and heavy urbanization, the tendency to use slangs and borrow words from other languages tend to be higher. For instance, while one may use to refer to a stranger as 'brother' in the central variety, other varieties would rather prefer the usage of 'mate' or 'dude' instead.

Everyday language used by them is no longer as close to the old Tamil as the central Tamil is. Madras Bashai evolved largely during the past three centuries. With its emergence as an important city in the British Empire when they recovered it from the French and as the capital of Madras Presidency, the contact with western world increased and a number of English words crept into the vocabulary. Many of these words were introduced by educated, middle-class Tamil migrants to the city who borrowed freely from English for their daily usage. Due to the presence of a considerable population of Telugu, Hindi–Urdu and many other language-speakers, especially, the Gujaratis, Marwaris and some Muslim communities, some Hindustani and Telugu words, too, became a part of Madras Bashai. At the turn of the 20th century, though preferences have since shifted in favor of the Central and Madurai Tamil dialects, the English words introduced during the early 20th century have been retained.

Meanwhile Madurai Tamil still maintains a certain level of the original respectful nature of the language. While it is still an urbanized city, the reason for this may perhaps lie in the fact that it is a significantly smaller temple city, with it being the heart of the city. So perhaps the religious beliefs through language tends to hold out more strongly. Madurai phrases ends a lot with the usage of 'u'. Madurai Tamil is also

one of the purest Tamil dialects spoken in Tamil Nadu along with the Central Tamil Dialect. One unique aspect in Madurai Tamil is the addition "i" for example, to someone is coming in Standard Tamil, it is "Yaaro varanga", but in Madurai Tamil, it is "Yaaro varainga".

The Tirunelveli Tamil Dialect (TTD) has on the whole 41 phonemes of which 31 are segmental and the remaining 10 are suprasegmental. Nellai Tamil also preserves archaic kinship terms that other dialects have long discarded. However, the most unusual feature of the Tamil spoken in the Tirunelveli region is that the medial "c" is pronounced as a voiceless palatal affricate as in Old Tamil and has not undergone the change to the dental "s" as in most other dialects. This kind of Tamil is very understandable if someone knows Madurai Tamil very well. For example, "come" in an informal in Madurai Tamil, it is Vaada, while in Tirunelveli Tamil, it is Vaade or Vaale. Another important aspect in Tirunelveli Tamil is that they drop the "thu" part of a word. For example, hungry in Standard Tamil is Pasikkithu, but in Tirunelveli Tamil, it is Pasiki.

The speciality of Kongu Tamil is the use of the alveolar ட் - Tra/Dra (as in the English word track) instead of retroflex T/D (ட) of standard Tamil. For example, 'ennuDaya' (mine) of standard Tamil is pronounced enRa in the Kongu dialect. However, only Coimbatore district people use this. Additionally, the use of guttural nasal (ங) that sounds "ng" as in the English word Gang, is more prevalent in Kongu Tamil, leading to situations where the grammar of Kongu Tamil would not fit into the grammar of standard Tamil. One of the examples is the use of ங to end a word like வாங் "vaang" or வாடுங் "vango" means 'come' expressed in a respectful tone, which in standard Tamil would be வாங்க "vaanga". Both of these are stereotyping Kongalam with regional, professional variations.

All these dialects are spoken across the different regions as we saw in the map earlier. There usually does not tend to be many social classes and heirarchies interwoven amongst them, except for the fact that chennai Tamil is spoken in a more populated, crowded and urbanized neighbourhoodss (but that in itself tends to be because of the nature of the city).

References:

- 1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madras_Bashai#Vocabulary
- 2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tirunelveli_Tamil#Peculiar_Nellai_Tamil_Words/_Phrases
- 3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madurai_Tamil
- 4) <https://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/streams-of-language-dialects-in-tamil-nal332/>