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Lexical Differences between Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil

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The aim of the study is to analyse reciprocal comprehension between Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil native speakers. The languages Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil are commonly regarded as two particularly closely related members of Tamil language. The aim of the study is to find how well Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil speakers understand each other and whether they are aware of the lexical differences. These people are communicating with each other every day without any difficulty. This paper mainly focuses on how lexical item appears in two different varieties of languages. The speakers sometime retain the original words, meanings and at other times the meaning changes. Most of the form gets different meaning in the dialect. In the target language the meaning is shared in few contexts and other contexts the meaning changes. When the meaning is same the forms are synonymous with each other. Few informants were selected and a sample questionnaire was given asking them to write the Tamil equivalent of 600 Sri Lankan Tamil words. Thus equal number of Tamil informants and Sri Lankan Tamil informants were selected and the data obtained were analysed. A lexical semantic approach was applied for the analysis. The basic findings are: (1) A Sri Lankan Tamil is able to comprehend the native Tamil easily. (2) A native Tamil level of understanding Sri Lankan Tamil is very minimal. A detailed analysis is done and the findings and the reasons for the level of comprehension will be given in the research paper with suitable examples.

Key words: comprehension, lexical differences, Sri Lankan Tamil, Tamil