

## English Borrowings versus Their Translated Equivalentents

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the issues related to translation of English borrowings focusing on the need of creation of technical terms in Tamil. As everyone knows language can't be static and it keeps changing according to the changes that happen in life style of the people, economy of the country and influence of soiocultural and political factors. In order to avoid puzzles which come up as a result of use of English borrowings in Tamil, we need to create technical terms which will help us to unravel the ambiguities connected to the use of English borrowings. This paper also deals with the issues related to creation of technical terms, methods of creation of technical terms, standardized forms of technical terms and communicative capacity of technical terms.

*Key words:* Translation, Transliteration, Technical terms, Modernization

### **1. Introduction**

As most of the literary words are international ones, it is worthwhile to categorize them before doing the translation. For instance, words such as pathology, parasitology, oncology, radiology, and astronomy are in practice in developed languages. Likewise, words in the discipline of arts, such as theatre, playwright, comedy, and soliloquy are in wide use of the world. Words such as Dictatorship, general election, poll, and franchise are found used in politics. Due to the scientific and technological development many new words such as key board, pentium, ram, internet, and email have come to the day to day speech. The field of physical education has introduced the words such as Qatar-final, run-out, stump etc. Due to the general food habits words such as Nescafe, kandos, cool drink etc. have been widely incorporated in the daily communication of countries. In terms of the examples given above, it should be determined as which words are to be translated and which ones are to be transliterated.

#### **1.1 Technical Words**

Technical words in Tamil are not enough. The endeavors to form terminologies have been inadequate. It is appalling that Tamil has not produced enough technical terms when compared to English and other languages. As most of the technical terms in Tamil are translations, a single English word may have more than one translated forms. This condition, in turn, creates the

need of choosing the most appropriate form. It should be taken into account that different forms of technical terms in Tamil for the same English word may be found. For instance, English 'cell' denotes both 'Minkalam'(battery) in Physics and 'Kalam' (human cell) in Biology.

### 1.2 Syntax

Syntax could be divided into two categories such as formal and informal. The former type comprises the literary style, official style, poetic style etc. Although these styles are different from another, they are not difficult to be translated. The other type is difficult to be translated, as it includes colloquial words, slang words and dialectical words. The meanings of these words are difficult to be comprehended and translated into Tamil.

Greater stress is to be given on figures of speech, when translating the literary works. Much care is needed when English euphemism, exaggeration, exclamation, irony, metaphor onomatopoeia, proverb, simile, suggestion etc. are translated into Tamil. During the twentieth century, the use of informal words has reasonably escalated in the Britain and American literature and this trend has posed big challenge to translators.

### 1.3 Colloquialism

Colloquial style differs from place to place. 'Pal' and 'chum' are colloquial forms of friend and the words 'bite' and 'snack' stand for meal colloquially. Shorten forms such as email, semi (Semester), uni (University) and movie are used to their full forms colloquially.

### 1.4 Slang

The Oxford dictionary defines the slang as follows

“ Slang is a form that is not suitable for good writing on formal occasions, especially the kind used by and typical of only one class of persons”

Every language has its own slang.

The slang form found in one language is very hard to be translated into another language. The words such as “Once in a blue moon” and “your tongue has run away with you” are colloquially used in modern literature.

### 1.5 Dialect

According to Fowler (1996), “A variety of language that prevails in a district with local peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation, and phrase. A good amount of difficulty lies in the translation of dialects”.

### 1.6 Archaic and Obsolete Words

Some English lexis such as Thou (you), Thy (Your), Aye (Yes) and Nay (No) have become archaic and obsolete but these lexis are still used by poets. Such words were amply applied in the works of Shakespeare but they were not in practice in his era.

### 1.7 Ellipsis

It's the occasion of excluding the word or words from a sentence when meaning can be construed without such a word or words. The sentence "She is a nurse and I a Teacher"

consists of an ellipsis, i.e "am". A good understanding of the words of ellipsis is necessary in translation.

### 1.8 Blended Words

An absolute understanding of blended words is essential for efficient translation.

The word 'brunch' is a blended form of 'breakfast' and 'lunch'

Examples : Cablegram

Cable +telegram

Electrocute

Electricity+Execute

### 1.9 Synonyms

Synonym is a word or a phrase with the same meaning as another in the same language maybe with a different style, grammar, or technical use. The words 'small' and 'short' are synonyms. Extra care is to be given when translating synonyms.

Examples: Noise, sound, blast, hum

Destroy, wipe out, annihilate, obliterate

Exclude, prohibit, keep out, and leave out

Murmur, mutter, mumble, etc

### 1.10 Transliteration

All the foreign words of different offshoots of knowledge that are introduced in one language are unfeasible to be translated and hence transliteration can be in practice an interim arrangement. If a well-organized structure is not adopted for transliteration, it will cause much complexity. For instance, the English 'Cement' is transliterated into Tamil in several forms like 'cimiṭu', 'cementu', 'cement', cimiṭ and 'cemenṭu' etc.

A lot of words with regard to military profession are transliterated because of the intelligibility and ease in understanding: General, Captain, Lieutenant, Brigadier, Major, Colonel, etc.

### 1.11 Difficulties in Translation

There are so many things to be considered when doing a translation as it connects two languages. Translation is also involved with many genres.

#### 1.11.1 Proverbs

Proverbs are strong expressions reflecting the history, heritage and traditions of a country or an ethnic group. Proverbs are said to be the base for the emergence of folklore. Therefore, citing proverbs in literature is very important. The word to word translation of proverbs from one language to another would result into ridiculousness. Translation is to be done in order to bring out the social consciousness of the community from that it comes out.

Direct translation of proverb does not provide the correct meaning all the time and hence the use of an equivalent proverb in the target language is preferable. Some examples of equivalent English and Tamil proverbs are given below.

1. Empty vessel makes sound- niraikuṭam ṭaḷampa:ṭu
2. Make hay while the sun shines- ka:ttuḷa po:ṭe ṭuttikoḷ
3. Haste is waste -paṭara:ṭa ka:tiam siṭara:ṭu
4. Little strokes fell great oaks-aṭi me:l aṭi vaiṭṭa:l ammium nahatum.
5. Union is strength -onrupaṭa:ḷ uṅṅu va:ḷvu.

#### 1.11.2 Jokes

Getting the essence of jokes or humorous expressions from one language into another by means of translation cannot be all the time possible. Jokes are characteristic of the traditions and

customary practices of the respective languages and hence the implied meaning of some jokes cannot be made apparent through translation.

For instance, the expression 'sinna melam' in Tamil refers to the practice of adultery and the direct translation 'small drumpet' does not denote the hidden message.

### 1.11.3 Abbreviations

Some phrases are used in abbreviation for convenience. Nevertheless, no consistency is adopted in using the English abbreviations in Tamil. Both translation and transliteration of the same English abbreviations are found used in Tamil.

Examples: CNN

NATO

UNICEF

### 1.11.4 Pun

Every language has pun. Puns are commonly seen in Tamil poetry and a translator intending to translate Tamil poetry is expected to be well-acquainted with it.

In translation words, symbols and formulae can be divided into four groups as follows.

1. The symbols and formulae that are to be used universally without any change.

e.g:  $\Sigma$   $\pi$  %

2. The words that are to be transliterated

e.g: Metre, litre, grams etc.

3. The words that are to be decided if to be transliterated or to be replaced by new words.

e.g: Cement, transformer, water –pump etc.

4. The words which necessarily demand the creation of new words

e.g: Balloon, Elasticity etc.

### 1.12 Creation of Technical Terms

In forming a technical term, enough stress is to be laid on the concept of that term. The source word of a term may not offer the pertinent concept. Hence while creating a technical term, the meaning of the source word becomes unimportant. For instance, the lexeme 'Economics' is the coinage of two Greek words 'Oikos' meaning house and 'Nomos' meaning law. If the meaning of the source words were taken into account, the entire meaning of the word "Economics" would be 'Law of the house'. Economics is defined as follows 'Management of household or money matter'. The Tamil equivalent is suitably created like 'potuḷa:ṭa;tam'. Likewise, the straight meaning derivation of the word 'Ecology' would be 'House method'. But, the appropriate Tamil equivalent is 'cu:ḷalial'.

### 1.13 Methods of Creation of Technical Terms

1. There are five methods of creation of technical terms in Tamil (Rama Sundaram, 1993,p.118)

1. Use of an old word
2. Meaning extension
3. Creation of a new word
4. Translation
5. Borrowing

#### 1.13.1 Use of an Old Word

It is the practice of a word that is already found in the local language the meaning of which is acceptable with the concept in question. For instance, the lexis 'ṭaccu' and 'ṭaccan' in Tamil are used as the equivalents for the English 'Carpentry' and 'Carpenter'.

#### 1.13.2 Meaning Extension

It is the extension of meaning of a word in order to correspond to the concept in question. The meaning of the word 'Kan' in Tamil- the eye, has been extended and 'Kannaṭi' is used as the equivalent of 'Spectacles'

#### 1.13.3 Creation of New word

It is the creation of a new word not relying on the etymology of the root word, but on the concept. The Tamil 'kanani' and 'minnaṅḷaḷ' are new formations for 'computer' and 'Electronic mail' of English.

### **1.13.4 Translation**

When a suitable word for a concept is not available, a foreign word corresponding to that concept can be translated.

Examples:

Hand phone- kaiṭoḷaipe:ci

Calculator kanini

### **1.13.5 Borrowing**

When an appropriate technical term is not found in the first language and difficulties are encountered in forming the new terms or in translating, a foreign word corresponding to the concept in question can be borrowed.e.g: UPS , Boofar

Borrowing of different foreign languages including Sanskrit, English, Portuguese, Dutch, French etc. are available in Tamil

## **1.14 Standardization of Technical Terms**

Standardization is necessary to get over the difficulties of having more than one technical term for a single concept. Ambiguity in meaning can be done away with and accuracy and clarity can be preserved by means of standardization. Standardized technical terms need to signal the anticipated meaning content with correctness.

### **1.14.1 Appropriateness and efficiency**

In case there are more than one technical term for a particular concept, a good choice needs to be done out of them

### **1.14.2 Adaptability**

It is the acceptance of the word that is in more practice than the others. The better practice of a word denoted the general acceptance of it in the society.

### **1.14.3 Economy and Simplicity**

The standardized word is anticipated to be of simplicity and economy

For instance, the word 'Minsa:ram' has been reduced to 'Min' and compounded with other words depending on the wants

Min ṭaṭai ( Power Interruption)

Min inaippu (Power supply)

Min veṭṭu (Power cut)

#### 1.14.4 Uniformity

Uniformity needs to be taken into account while standardizing the technical terms of the same category.

The word 'Tele' stands for remoteness and a uniformity can be seen in the set of term given below.

English	Tamil
Telephone	<u>ṭolaipesi</u>
Telescope	<u>ṭolainokki</u>
Television	<u>ṭolaika:ṭci</u>

Some difficulties are encountered in maintaining the uniformity of some technical words.

English	Tamil
Civil dress	sa: <u>ṭa</u> :tana uṭai
Civil rights	kuṭiyiyæl utimai
Civil disobedience	saṭṭa maruppu

#### 1.15 Different Ways of forming Technical terms

1. The English and Sanskrit borrowed words are altered according to the Tamil practice.

e.g: Agreement- uṭanpa:ṭu

Subsidy- ma:niyam

2. Loan blend- A coinage where one part of the technical term is a borrowed word and the other part, a Tamil one.

e.g: Air service- vima:na se:vai

Tax increase – vati aṭikatippu

3. The formation of phrases in corresponding with meaning of the borrowed word.

Clemency petition- katinai manu

Unanimous decision- ə:kopiṭa ti:rma:nam

4. The modification of the meaning of the classic Tamil words in accordance with the new concepts.

Kutimam – citizenship

ṭu:tikai- brush

kuṭumpu- collection of houses.

5.The formation of technical terms that are negatives of the English words.

A:paṭuilla:ṭavar- innocent

muranpaṭa:mai- Consent

6. Creation of technical terms based on classic Tamil words.

ṭolpotuḷ a:raaici- Archeological research

kaṭukaṭi- Intercity

If the borrowed word and its technical term are available, the practice of the borrowed word can be given up provided the technical term has unequivocal meaning content.

	<b>Borrowed Word</b>	<b>Technical Word</b>
Experience	anupavam	paṭṭarivu

Resignation

ra:ḷinama

paṭavi vilakal

### 1.16 Communicative Capacity of Technical Terms and Modernization

Language is a symbolic system that meets the communicative needs of a community. A language has the capacity to do a number of social tasks. Nevertheless, languages vary from one another in the manner in which they carry out their tasks. For a better contribution of a language in its social task, the language needs to be expanded. A language could be expanded by extending its lexicon and grammatical and literary sources. To make a language to be independent and effective in its use, language planning is essential. Weinstein (1980) says that language planning is the planned change in the language use of a society and this change may contribute to solve the problems encountered in communication. It is also accepted that the role of languages and language planning are important to the development of a nation

### 1.17 Modernization

Modernization plays a vital role in language expansion. Ferguson (1956) comments that modernization is the modification of a language to keep pace with the capacity of other languages in their language practice, considering the changes to be made in the language usage according to modern developments. Ferguson (1956) further says that modernization might occur at two phases.

1. Expansion of Vocabulary
2. Creation of new structures

Now due to the fast progress in science and technology, new concepts and ideas come out. In an attempt of interpreting these new concepts and ideas, new technical terms are created. Herein, a language becomes modernized

Haugen (1966) categorizes language development onto 4 stages.

1. Choice
2. Design
3. Expansion
4. Social adaptation

Modernization means not only the addition of lexicon but grammatical innovation as well. Simplification by which the language elements are made simple for understanding in communication is a part of modernization as well.

Expansion and simplification of language elements while using the language in new disciplines and while communicating new thoughts could be modernization.

Function of language elements is very significant for efficient interaction. Two ways could be followed in modernizing a language

1. Borrowing elements from other languages.
2. Modifying its own language elements by some means of and increasing the language effectiveness

So far as the South Indian languages are concerned, modernization takes place through borrowing from English loan word, translation, meaning extension etc.

### **1.18 Role of Dictionary in Language Modernization**

Modernization in any language can be elucidated on the basis of three features. First an understanding of the distinction between modernization and Westernization might be helpful in this context. Modernization of Tamil does not mean that Tamil needs to be similar to English. It does not follow that English needs to be viewed as model and all its aspects need to be passed on to Tamil. Because of contact between Tamil and English, there is more feasibility to mutual borrowing and mutual translation.

One of the features of modernization is the introduction of technology in language. Technical tools like Typewriter, Keyboard, Scanner, Printer etc. are useful in communication beyond space and time, in escalating the speed and reach of language delivery and in storing information. These equipments assist in operating the language resourcefully and efficiently.

The second feature is the extension of language resource. It is functional in forming new lexis, new styles, and new representations. These aspects give heterogeneity to a language. New language disciplines like scientific technical terms and legal terms and journalistic style and administrative language style and short story form and advertisement form have come into being in Tamil. Because of their presence, there have been modifications in the structure and grammar of the language. New phonemes, new phrases, and new rhetoric have emerged in the language.

The third feature of modernization is the modifications in the semantic structure that are expected to bring out the new social values. Consequently, for instance, in Tamil lexis such as

'ampattan' and vaṇṇa:n' standing for "barber" and 'dhoby' in English respectively have come to be replaced by words 'muṭiṭituṭ tuvo:r' and 'sælævaiṭlila:li'. Herein, the first pair is on the caste division and the second pair is formed on account of the labour type. Convention and modernity are preserved by the practice of 'kanakkuplai' (account clerk) in conventional business centers and 'knakkar' in modern business complexes.

The recent publication of a dictionary titled 'Griyavin Thatkala Tamil Akarathy' has compiled present advance and newly created concepts in Tamil. Lexical meanings depending on the present practice have been given in this dictionary. The removal of slang and old words is a remarkable aspect of this dictionary. The functional feature of Tamil has been brought out by providing denominations to words, like Sri Lankan word, extinct word etc. The meaning divisions and boundaries point out the meaning expansion and change of present day Tamil.

The following list shows the English borrowings and their the general standard translated forms.

#### TRANSLATED FORMS

<b>Borrowings</b>	<b>Tamil translations</b>
Accountant	kanakk:lar
Aeroplane	a:hayavima:nam
Agent	muḥavar
Airport	vimaṇaṭa ḷam
Army	pad æyinar
Arrest	kaiṭu
Bathroom	kuḷiyal arai
Bicycle	tuviṭḷakkaravṇṭi
Bill	ciddai
Bishop	pe:ta:yar
Black Market	karuppu canṭai
Blade	cavara alahu

Boarding	v i <u>t</u> u <u>t</u> i
Bomb	ku <u>n</u> t <u>u</u>
Bomber	ku <u>n</u> tu vimanam
Bulb	minkumil
Calendar	na:dka:t <u>t</u> t <u>t</u> i
Camera	puhaipada katuvi
Camp	muha:m
Campus	vala:ham
Cancer	puttuno:i
Certificate	t <u>a</u> t <u>a</u> :t <u>a</u> t <u>a</u> pp <u>a</u> t <u>t</u> t <u>t</u> itam
Chalk	venka <u>t</u> t <u>t</u> i
Cheque	ka:so:lai
Christmas	na <u>t</u> t <u>a</u> r
Church	t <u>t</u> e:va:layam
Clerk	elutuvinaiyar
Coil	curu
College	kallu:ti
Commission	a:naikku  u
Computer	ka <u>n</u> an <u>i</u>
Copy	pira <u>t</u> i
Court	ni:t <u>i</u> manru
Cricket	t <u>u</u> d <u>u</u> pa:t <u>t</u> t <u>a</u> m
Cross	ciluvai
Curfew	u:tada <u>n</u> ku

Current	minsa:ṭ tam
Customs	cunka aṭika:ti
Diary	na:dkurippu
Divorce	viva:hataṭ tu
Election	te:rtal
Engine	iyanṭiram
Entry	muraippa:du
Fan	minviciri
Flask	veppakuduvai
Generator	min pirappa:ki
Identity card	adaiya  a aṭ tai
Iron	iṣṭirikkai
Helicopter	ilaṇkuvanurṭi
Lavatory	malasalaku:ṭam
Machine	iyathiram
Manager	muha:maiya:lar
Muscle	ṭasaika
Nurse	ta:ti
Office	ka:tiya:layam
Overseer	o:vasiyar
Packet	poti
Paper	ka:hitam
Pass	anumatipaṭ ṭitam
Passport	kadavuci:ṭ tu

Pencil	elu <u>t</u> uko:l
Pension	O:ivu:t <u>i</u> yam
Photo	puhaipadam
Radio	va:noli
Report	arikkai
Station	nilaiyam
Strike	ve:laibnit <u>u</u> t <u>t</u> am
Switch	a: <u>l</u> i
T.V	<u>t</u> olaika:tci
Train	puhaiyira <u>t</u> am
Type	<u>t</u> addaccu
Video	olippa <u>t</u> ivu

### Conclusion

Due to the continuous increase of English borrowings in Tamil, and the number of Tamil literary publications including school and tertiary level institutional text books which require technical terms, a great difficulty arises in getting Tamil translated forms for all the necessary English borrowings. Since there is no adequate resource personnel to undertake the task of translation, material producers are forced to use the English borrowing either in their transliterated forms or assimilated forms in their works.

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