

# **The difficulties faced by students who learn Tamil as a Second Language when they are taught by Sri Lankan Tamil (Jaffna Tamil) and Muslim Tamil teachers**

D. G. T. A. Jayasinghe  
Department of Languages  
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka  
[thilinianuradha11@gmail.com](mailto:thilinianuradha11@gmail.com)

The focus of this research is to study the difficulties faced by the students who learn Tamil as a Second Language, when they are taught by both Sri Lankan Tamil (Jaffna Tamil) and Muslim Tamil teachers. The data was gathered by conducting interviews with 2 subject experts and 30 students who learn Tamil as a Second Language, in the University of Kelaniya. Data was subjected to a comparative study with a quantitative analysis. Accordingly it is found that the students face difficulties as there are Phonological, Morphological, Syntactic and Semantic differences in the same utterance, when it is expressed using both dialects. At the same time problems in question forms, word endings, reduplicated progressive in Muslim Tamil, and use of Arabic and Sinhalese words instead of the real Tamil word, by Muslim teachers could be cited. On these occasions the students tend to think that Muslim Tamil is easier than Jaffna Tamil. The reason is that, in Jaffna Tamil there are specific grammar rules even in the spoken variety but not in Muslim Tamil. Even the students are misled thinking that Arabic and Sinhalese words are original Tamil words. However, in finding solutions, it is found that learning Sri Lankan Tamil (JT) makes it easy for the students to grasp the written variety, because Sri Lankan Tamil is close to the written variety. That is hard to be done when they are taught Muslim Tamil. Sri Lankan Tamil is recommended to be taught to Second Language students, as it does not cause difficulties, by the subject experts too as it is close to the written variety.

**Keywords:** Sri Lankan Tamil, Muslim Tamil, Second Language Learning, Difficulties