

*In a language there are only differences*

**- Saussure**

***CHAPTER 2***

**DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

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The research on the ‘An Analysis of Strategies in Interlanguage Communication Employed by Undergraduate Students in Dindigul District’, is based on the empirical study conducted by the researcher in all the colleges and Universities in Dindigul district and the respondents are undergraduate students selected from six blocks in which the institutions are situated (fig 2.1).

#### Objectives

The study was undertaken with the following objectives :

1. to stratify the interlanguage communication strategies according to the frequency of the occurrence in the interlanguage communication situation,
2. to explore, find out and analyze the communication strategies employed by the students in communication situation,
3. to use the outcome of the analysis for suggesting methods to help the students in better communication,

4. to find out if there is any correlation between the background of the students and the strategies used by them, and
5. to explore the possibilities of incorporating these communication strategies in the classroom situation in teaching strategies.

These objectives steered the study methodologically to arrive at certain conclusions.

#### Selection of the Respondents

Multistage systematic stratified proportionate random sampling procedure has been adopted to select students for the empirical research. The undergraduate students of all colleges and Universities in the Dindigul district were identified and they were stratified according to their faculty. A further stratification is done according to the gender of the respondents. The factual details are given in Table 2.1. To derive ten percent distribution from the total population, proportionate number of students from each stratum has been selected. Since the total population of the undergraduate student in all the educational institutions in Dindigul district, for the year 2001 - 2002 was 7945, roughly

800 students were selected for the study. The researcher collected these details from the National Information Centre (NIC), Department of Statistics, Dindigul District Collectorate, Dindigul. The necessary data were elicited from these ten percent students by various methods. One such method used for collecting data on the profile of the respondents was questionnaire.

College/University	Arts		Science		Male (total)	Female (total)	Total	Total 10%
	Male	Female	Male	Female				
Mother Teresa University (W)	0	158	0	186	0	344	344	34.4
Govt. Arts College for Women, Nilakottai	0	433	0	206	0	639	639	63.9
Kodaikanal Christian College	45	25	90	30	135	55	190	19.0
Palani Andavar College of Arts and Science for Women	0	1023	0	636	0	1659	1659	165.9
Palani Andavar College of Arts and Science for Men	770	0	473	0	1243	0	1243	124.3
Rev. Jacob Memorial College, Ambilikkai	48	10	109	50	157	60	217	21.7
Rama Prabha College	70	20	135	50	205	70	275	27.5
M.V.M College for Women	0	642	0	1074	0	1716	1716	171.6
G.T.N College	315	62	397	63	712	125	837	83.7
GR1, Gandhigram	323	89	273	140	596	229	825	82.5
					3048	4897	7945	794.5

**Table 2.1.** Selection of Respondents

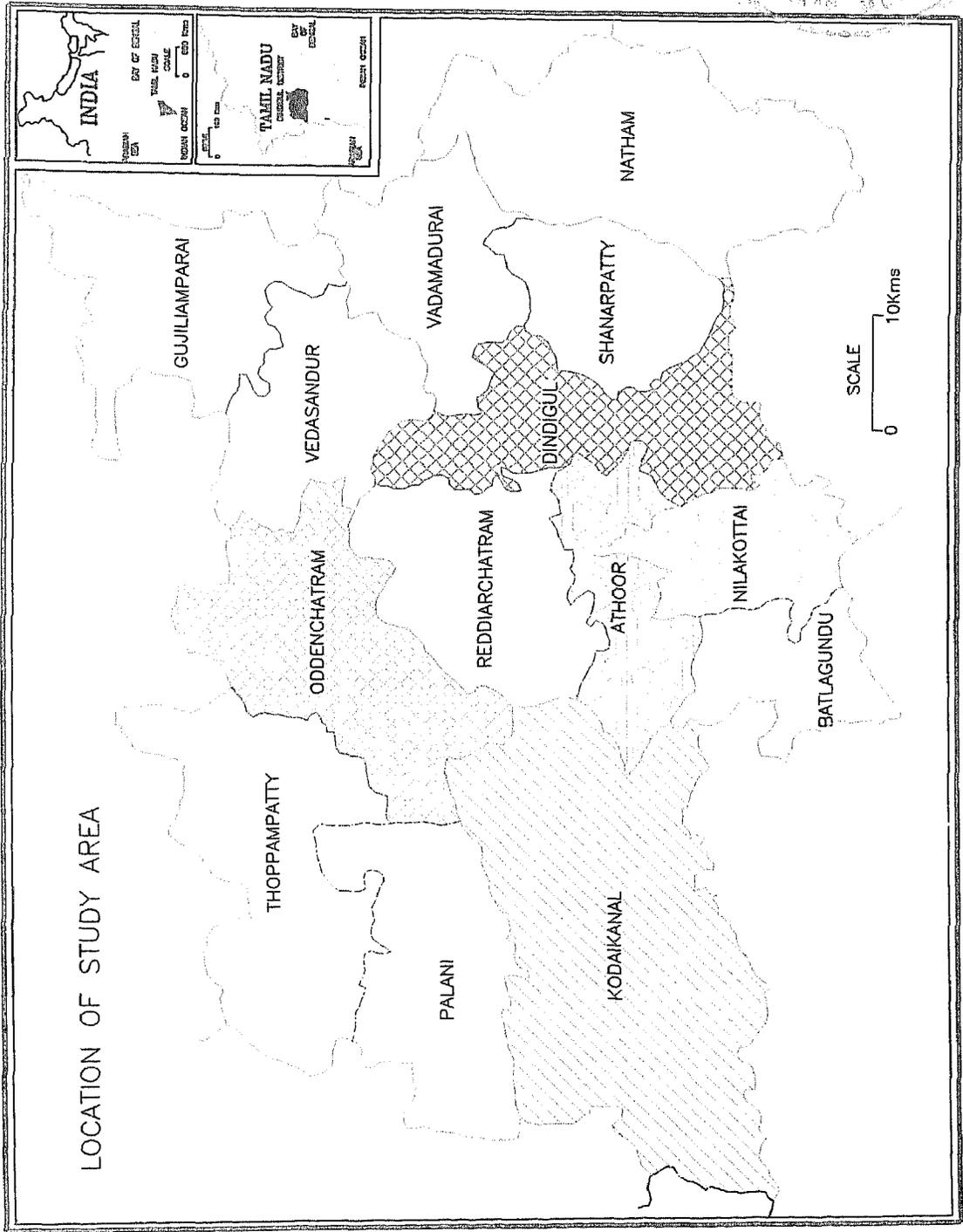


Figure 2.1. Location of Study Area

## Questionnaire

Questionnaires are common instruments of data collection. A questionnaire, generally contains a set of questions logically related to a problem under study aiming at eliciting responses from the respondents, where the content, response structure, the wordings of questions, question sequence, etc., are same for all respondents. The researcher needed data pertaining to the sociological, geographical and educational background of the respondents. The need to know the respondents' study habits, exposure to English, impact of mass media on the respondent was also one of the reasons for administering the questionnaire. There are two ways of administering the questionnaire. A questionnaire can be sent by post and collected within a stipulated period. Sometimes this method does not work out for various reasons. The questionnaire is lost, the respondents need clarification, and the validity of the answers needs verification. So the researcher decided to follow the other method and hence a questionnaire containing forty questions was personally distributed among the students and collected immediately. This process was repeated among all the sample students at

different phases in all colleges and Universities in the study area, which is represented in Figure. 2.1. This questionnaire (Appendix I) incorporates all the necessary details required by the researcher to assess the background, exposure to media, and the language skills of the sample respondents. This questionnaire contains dichotomous or two-choice questions, where the responses are in Yes/No type and multiple choice questions, where there are four to six alternative responses depending upon the nature of the question.

The first part of the questionnaire concentrates on the profile of the respondents. The respondents' name, gender, age, mother tongue, other languages known, area of residence (Rural or Urban), faculty (Arts or Science) including the year of study and the institutions where they study are the details covered apart from a few questions that cover the communicative skill of the respondents in English in general.

The next part, 'Exposure to Media' deals with the respondents' exposure to various mass media in English, such as English newspapers, English news bulletins over Television and Radio, and English films.

In the area 'Language Skills', the centre of focus is laid on the communicative ability of the respondents in the four skills in English: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Data pertinent to the contexts where these skills are used by the respondents; whether there is any communication lacuna; and the factors that lead to this lacuna find a prominent place in this section of the questionnaire.

The final part 'Communicative Skills' concentrates on the alternative methods tried by the learners to fill this communication lacuna in a context, especially, in spoken English, on which the thesis has been built upon. The respondents' use of various strategies in the interlanguage communication situation, their communicative methods and their view about an ideal communication are the areas that have been analyzed and the researcher infers from this part the necessary strategies used by the respondents. Also among the various interlanguage communication strategies the researcher intended to select only four, that is, overgeneralization, transfer, and code-switching and code-mixing which are considered as major communication strategies in an interlanguage communication situation. For

this kind of selection, this part of questionnaire is used to find out what type of strategy is widely used, apart from observation method selected by the researcher to find out the frequency of the type of communication strategies used.

## Observation

Besides eliciting data through the questionnaire the researcher used both participatory and non-participatory observation techniques. This observation was done in two phases, the first phase observation was done when the questionnaires were issued personally. For this, the researcher conducted group interviews and held discussions with the respondents on various topics, which elicited interlanguage strategies in their communication. The researcher sometimes simulated situations for discussion, and gave lead questions to encourage conversation among the students. The participant observation, that is, the interaction with the student groups enabled the researcher to classify certain strategies then and there. The second phase observation was done among the students who form the part of the respondents of the questionnaire. The researcher followed these students to various places in the college

campus, both inside and outside the classroom, and observed their interactions and responses in various situations and with various people. The data were collected from these students in both the phases and used for analysis. The reports on the inferences of the participatory and non-participatory observation techniques are given in the form of case analysis and focused group discussions concentrating on the main objectives of the research.

As the entire research is an empirical study, the primary source of this study is the student community itself. The secondary source is essentially information on communication strategies by language experts. Though various studies have been taken on various interlanguage situations, so far no study has been undertaken in an interlanguage communication situation comprising Tamil and English as L1 and L2 respectively. These secondary materials are collected from Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh and through various online websites.

Regarding the analysis of data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 10) is used. As regards the

documentation, the entire work follows the ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*** (Fifth Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi (2000).

#### Further Scope

This research is limited to the undergraduate students in Dindigul district and also to select strategies. This may be further extended to analyze all the communication strategies and may also be extended to a comparative study between rural and urban students, arts and science students. Apart from that, this research does not incorporate professional college students and as there is a mushroom growth of professional college all over the state, a research may be undertaken to include Engineering college students and also management students.

#### **Structure** of the Study

The first and introductory chapter discusses the properties of language, role of English in India and various methods of teaching English as a second language. The chapter concludes with role of Communicative Approach in bringing a balance between fluency and accuracy.

The second chapter “Design of Study” explains the methodology of the study; objectives of the study, selection of respondents, adoption of questionnaire and observation conducted by the researcher, scope and limitation of the study and the structure of the thesis.

The third chapter “Review of Literature” briefly presents earlier studies undertaken in this area to grasp and formulate the data collected under a particular stratification.

The fourth chapter “Strategies in Interlanguage Communication” defines and explains various strategies in interlanguage communication as viewed by various linguists.

The fifth chapter “An Analysis of Strategies in Interlanguage Communication” analyzes the data in two phases: an analysis of the profile of the respondents and an analysis of the data collected from the sample respondents.

The final chapter “Summary and Conclusion” sums up the entire study and gives the major findings and suggestions for incorporating the findings in a second language learning situation.