

## **Chapter 3**

### **Nature and design of the study**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In chapter two, review of literature in the area of classroom interaction, SLA, teacher talk and teacher reflection was carried out. A theoretical framework for studying teacher's classroom discourse was presented in order to enable teachers' to become more aware of their own talk in the classroom, to understand their interactional patterns and facilitate meaningful interaction matching with their pedagogic goals. This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study. The research paradigm that guided this work along with the research questions are discussed here. The profiles of the teacher participants of the study have also been explained. A section is devoted to data collection tools which were used for this study.

This study is designed to explore the interactional patterns predominant in Indian ESL classrooms to understand the characteristics of teacher talk. For this purpose the Conversation Analysis approach and a Variable approach to investigating classroom interaction have been adopted. The rationale for this has already been discussed in the previous chapter. This exploration is assumed to enable the researcher to critically look at the available Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk framework (Walsh, 2006) and hence identify areas of modification to suite the Indian context. This resulted in devising of modified context- sensitive version of the framework in consultation with the teacher- participants. The broader research plan of the study was to follow each of the six teachers through their course of teaching for a span of four months. Having identified the dominant features of classroom interaction and the characteristics of their discourse in the classroom the teachers were encouraged to use the revised

version of SETT framework to reflect on their own classroom discourse. The development of the teachers was tracked through regular classroom observations, reflective feedback interviews and workshops. This allowed the researcher to record their journey in understanding their own classroom discourse, its impact of their teaching, their raised awareness of the interactional choices available to them and its link to creation of learning opportunities. Finally, the Reflective Framework for Classroom Discourse (RFCD) evolved from this study which connects the various stages of implementation of the revised SETT tool with varying levels of reflection.

In the description of the methodology as well as in the discussions on the results which are presented in the subsequent chapter, excerpts from the data are provided using examples of different teachers to support the argument.

### **3.2 Research problem**

Research attempting to describe discourse of second language classrooms has been prevalent for almost five decades now however, the concern has not been to promote understanding among teachers and facilitate professional development.

Researchers have highlighted the importance of meaningful interaction in the teaching and learning process. They have acknowledged the complexity of classroom interaction and it is considered to be at the heart of language acquisition, especially the interaction that takes place between the teachers and the learners and successful teaching is almost equated to successful management of interaction (Ellis,1990,1998; Allwright,1984). For effective language teaching, teachers' classroom interaction needs to be both understood and improved to promote professional development (Walsh, 2011). The need to raise awareness of interactional processes is central to an understanding by both the teachers and learners of how language is acquired in a

formal context. The role of the teacher has been considered to be of prime importance in promoting meaningful interaction as ‘the teacher plays a crucial role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that will foster, to the greatest extent, both classroom learning and second language acquisition’ (Johnson,1995:90).

Research findings support the claim that the ability to understand interactional processes at play is crucial to facilitate learning opportunity and to prevent learners from becoming ‘lost’ in the discourse (Breen, 1998). Moreover, the quality of interaction is largely determined by teachers during their face-to-face communication with the learners. It is extremely important that interaction is optimised rather than maximised as the quality of interaction clearly contributes to learning. To improve language learning in the classroom, appropriate interaction in line with desired learning outcomes has to be encouraged. Thus, attempts to encourage understanding of classroom interaction among teachers for professional development had to be operationalised by taking course to the processes of self and collaborative reflection. Much of the literature in teacher education suggests that the focus needs to be on individualistic as well as collaborative reflection.

Teacher talk has been studied in the Indian context in the past two decades broadly in the following areas: impact of fear on language learning through teacher talk, exploring teacher beliefs about classroom communication, using communicative activities to improve classroom interaction, use of multimedia to enhance classroom interaction, emotional intelligence as reflected in teacher talk, use of mother tongue in teacher talk. Patterns of classroom interaction in ESL Indian classrooms have also been reported. However, none of these studies have tried to look at the challenges involved in trying to implement a teacher-friendly tool to raise awareness among

teachers to closely reflect on their own teacher talk and hence modifying existing framework in the context of their present classroom interactional patterns, its implications for classroom teaching and to strengthen the link with professional development.

Keeping in mind the above factors, this project proposes to study the classroom interactional patterns predominant in ESL classrooms in the Indian context, explore the characteristics of teacher talk and then feed in such observations to propose a modified Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) tool which is context-sensitive and teacher driven. This are expected to encourage teachers to engage in self and collective reflection on their classroom discourse. This is believed to help teachers to unravel the interactional patterns of their own classrooms thereby enabling them to make modifications to their classroom discourse and practice, thus facilitating professional development. The study thus aims to explore:

---the interactional patterns of ESL classrooms and hence the dominant characteristics of teacher talk

---whether the teachers' discourse is linked to their pedagogic goals

---the use of revised SETT tool (to suite the context of the teachers) to raise awareness among in-service TGTs and PGTs about their classroom interactional patterns and characteristics of their own classroom talk

-----find links between the implementation of the tool and different levels of reflection

---- to what extent does self and collective reflection on one's own classroom talk help teachers to engage in their personal theory building and contribute to professional development

### **3.3 Context of the study**

Majority of teacher education programmes prevalent in the country (both pre- and in-service) pay very little or no attention to classroom interaction. Teacher education programmes conventionally aim at some sort of subject-based preparation and training in classroom methodology. Walsh (2011) has pointed out that ‘the most striking and noteworthy observations about classroom discourse and language teaching is how little time is actually spent making language teachers aware of its importance.’ He argues that ‘classroom processes will only improve once teachers have the means of tapping into their local context and are able to improve it.’ Following the above suggestion, the focus of this study has been to make language teachers aware of the importance of classroom interaction and encourage them to understand their own classroom discourse deeply embedded in their local contexts.

To carry out a research with such a focus we wished to explore an ESL situation in India which could be a fair representative of the teaching learning context in the country. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), which was established by the Central Government in 1962, has a total of 1099 Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central schools) in the country. It is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

English taught under the CBSE curriculum is a fair representative of the English Language Teaching context in India. English language teaching in the Kendriya Vidyalayas better capture the multilingual context in the country than other urban English medium schools. The challenges representing the ESL situation is well reflected in the KV schools.

In order to understand the English Language teaching situation in the KVs an informal survey was carried out with colleagues, fellow researchers, students, friends,

relatives and family members to find out their general perceptions about the quality of English Language teaching in these schools. The researcher's hunch was that the quality of English taught at these schools suffered and there was a scope for understanding their real classroom challenges pertaining to classroom interaction. This study if conducted in urban English medium schools catering to economically privileged learners would not have served our purpose of exploring the applicability of the SETT framework within a broader Indian context. Teachers who are very proficient in English (native like proficiency) and well versed with latest language teaching methods (with a background in ELT) who have access to best teaching practices and do not face any dearth of resources would find the framework applicable in their context as suggested by Walsh (2006). Therefore, attempts were made to work with ESL teachers facing challenges which represent the authentic ESL situation in India like learner drop out, bilingual education, mixed learner backgrounds in terms of socio-economic status, limited resources and accessibility to teacher development activities. The informal survey confirmed the researcher's hunch.

Subsequently, a preliminary consultative meeting was conducted with an official at KVS who could guide the selection of schools procedurally. Access to four KVs in the Delhi Region was desirable in order to interact with eight teachers. The teachers teaching secondary and higher secondary classes at KVs are called TGTs (Trained Graduate Teacher) or PGTs (Post Graduate Teacher). The researcher planned to work with four TGTs (English) and four PGTs (English). It was suggested by KVS that the research be carried out in two double shift KVs instead of four single shifts KVs. This had two fold benefits. First, procedurally it was easier to grant permission on part of KVS and secondly it made it easier for the researcher to visit the schools from logistics point of view.

Kendriya Vidyalaya 1 (SL1) and Kendriya Vidyalaya 2 (SL 2) in North Delhi Region were suggested to the researcher keeping in mind the number of PGTs and TGTs available in these schools and other factors for instance, whether other research work is going on, availability of teachers etc. A formal interaction with SL 1 principal, Ms. Rashmi Johri (name changed), who volunteered to throw light on the English Language Teaching (ELT) situation at KVs in general and SL 1 in specific revealed some interesting observations which further confirmed the researcher's hunch. SL 1 principal was an English teacher herself and her enthusiasm to share her experiences about ELT in KVs was found very helpful in conducting this study. Other than candidly sharing her view points and experiences she personally encouraged her English teachers to take active part in the study. This had a positive impact on the interaction between the researcher and the teachers.

Ms. Johri pointed out that the quality of English Language Teaching suffers in KVs in general (except a few KVs which have a selected urban student profile) because of the following reasons:

- The learners are from mixed socio-economic background with varying language proficiency.
- The quality of English Language Teaching is extremely poor in the primary section as the teachers teaching English may not even be fluent speakers themselves. They may have a degree in some other discipline but also teach English. As a result, the errors in the teacher's speech affect the learning in serious ways.

- She pointed out that in some cases even the English teachers fail to express themselves accurately and coherently in English. This poses a huge challenge for the teacher as well as the learners to cope with language learning.
- Most English teachers either have no background in ELT or have very limited exposure to the idea of teaching English Language as a skill. All of them have a degree in English Literature and hence their main focus is to ‘cover’ the syllabus.

Ms. Johri also observed that there are issues even at the level of recruitment. She found incompetent teachers being taken in who eventually lack motivation and professionalism while carrying out job responsibilities. She expressed her disappointment recalling a few of her experiences where having the right contacts were given preference over competence and quality control.

The CBSE English course taught at these schools is representative of a curriculum that is largely taught across the country. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) lays special emphasis on the need to focus on English Language teaching and learning as skill and states that an ‘input-rich communicational environment’ is a pre-requisite for language learning. It mentions the importance of concepts like language across the curriculum, authentic materials and the significance of the four macro skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. It also highlights the importance of teacher education and states that it is ‘ongoing and onsite (through formal or informal support systems), as well as preparatory’. It also points out its expectations in these lines: ‘All teachers who teach English should have basic proficiency in English. All teachers should have the skills to teach English in ways appropriate to their situation and levels based on some knowledge of how languages are learnt. A variety of materials should be available to provide an input-rich curriculum, which focuses on meaning.’ The role

of the teacher has been stated to be that of ‘a facilitator who encourages learners to reflect, analyse and interpret’. Thus, one can argue that the CBSE curriculum has the potential to take into its fold innovation, creativity and encourage the best practices in language teaching. However, the classroom reality and the curricular goals are at two extreme ends of a continuum- one which is full of challenges and limitations and the other which wishes to promote the best practices. This study fits well in exploring the gaps that exist between these two ends and suggest ways in which teachers may be able to realise their pedagogic goals through a close examination and self-reflection of their own teaching and make their interactions more meaningful and acquisition rich.

Interactions with teachers revealed that the main focus of the English course is the Literature Reader. The other books which focus on developing language proficiency are not used in the classroom. The reasons given by the teachers will be discussed in the next chapter. The teachers also discussed the challenges that they face with the present assessment framework and materials. English is taught as content and not as a skill. Teachers’ classroom discourse is a result of the larger curricular goals and more specific pedagogic goals in the classroom. Therefore, in the process of investigating classroom discourse the researcher and the teachers were bound to engage in discussions surrounding the materials, curriculum and assessment.

### **3.4 Assumptions**

The present study is based on a number of assumptions which helped in formulating the hypotheses for the study. These assumptions are:

1. The ESL teacher’s ability to *manage* classroom interaction determines the success or otherwise of a lesson

2. There is an intrinsic relationship between language use and pedagogic goals which requires closer understanding
3. The quality of Teacher talk has a direct effect on the quality of classroom interaction
4. The teacher controls the patterns of classroom interaction and hence it is the teacher's responsibility to promote meaningful interaction in the classroom
5. Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) can act as a tool for reflection to help teachers to both describe the classroom interaction of their lessons and develop an understanding of their interactional processes
6. Self- and collective reflection on one's own classroom discourse helps teachers to gain a closer understanding of their classroom interactional patterns and hence 'improve' teaching and contribute to professional development
7. The process of reflection has varying levels---surface to deep---and every teacher has her own pace while reflecting and may be at varying levels of reflection. The SETT framework is capable of allowing teachers to engage in different levels of reflection.
8. SETT framework as proposed by Walsh (2006) when applied in the Indian context would need modifications to suite the requirements of the teachers.

### **3.5 Research questions**

To study the classroom interactional patterns of ESL classrooms and to explore the applicability of the SETT tool in the Indian context by engaging teachers in self- and

collective reflection, the study aims to seek answers to the following research questions:

Does the teacher try to maximise learning opportunities in the classroom by using effective strategies to clarify, check or confirm meanings? (Use of confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetition, clarification requests, reformulation, turn completion, back tacking)

What are the dominant interactional patterns and modes in the classroom? Are there more modes and interactional features in the classrooms other than the ones identified by Walsh (2006)?

What are the challenges involved in implementing the SETT framework? What modifications need to be made to make it effective in the Indian context?

To what extent does the teacher demonstrate Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)?

Can reflection on teachers' discourse enable them to strengthen the link between their language use and pedagogic goals in order to increase classroom interactional space?

Is there a connection between teacher's engagement with the SETT tool and quality of reflection? If yes, then how does varying levels of reflection on one's own classroom discourse help in increasing learning opportunities in the classroom?

### **3.6 Hypotheses**

Based on the above assumptions the following hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

1. Teacher's discourse reflects the dominant interactional patterns of the classroom,

2. Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) tool, when revised to match the specific teaching and learning contexts, can act as an effective tool for reflection to enable teachers to understand their classroom interactional processes and hence improve classroom practices, and
3. There is a connection between the SETT framework and different levels of reflection and it allows teachers to identify their pedagogic goals clearly and enables them to link them with their language use

### **3.7 Research Methodology**

This study is based on the assumption that the L2 classroom context is not singular. Contexts are locally constructed by participants through and in interaction in the light of institutional goals and pedagogic objectives. Keeping in mind the nature of the study a mixed method was adopted which used both qualitative and quantitative ways to analyse the data. Reflective conversation framework was found to be appropriate for this study. Its dialogic nature for promoting reflective practice seemed to match the research concerns. In this section the philosophical stances of the study have been discussed along with qualitative and quantitative research methods. Finally one arrives at the research methodology framework for this study at the end of this chapter.

#### **3.7.1 Underlying philosophical motivations**

In this section the philosophical tradition that has guided the research is discussed. The selection of research method and data analysis tools was based on the philosophical paradigm selected for this work. Table 6 provides a brief description of the different epistemological stances. It is in no way exhaustive but highlights the

major differences in various philosophical stances which pave the way to locate the philosophical underpinning for this study.

<b>Philosophical Category Group/Tradition</b>	<b>Defining Attribute</b>
Empiricism	Knowledge is based on direct (sensory) experience of physical objects or events.
Traditional positivism	Knowledge develops through three phases: fictitious, abstract, and then scientific.
Logical positivism	Two forms of knowledge are stable, logical-mathematical and natural-scientific knowledge.
Postpositivism	Set of arguments against positivism; for example, scientific laws being verified because there is no logical reason to argue that a current pattern of events will follow the past pattern of events.
Rationalism	Knowledge, based on reasoning, is determined by the mind and not by our senses as we experience the world.
Hermeneutics	In the hermeneutic circle, one uses the interpretation of a piece of text to understand the whole text, and the understanding of the whole is used to interpret parts; this goes in a circular fashion. This part/whole process is systematically and rigorously applied;
Structuralism	What makes something what it is its function not its composition.
Poststructuralism	Reaction to the dogmatism associated with some structuralists

Critical theory	Critique of the power structures through a variety of perspectives, such as feminist critical theory, economic, political;
Idealism	Knowledge consists only of ideas of representation about reality;
Interpretivism	Reality is assumed to be constructed by the knower based on the interpretation of a particular action;
Constructivism	Many constructions of reality are possible.

**Table 6: Philosophical traditions**

Adapted from Bredo (2006), Guba (1990), and Schwandt (2000) in Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011:7)

Educational research of recent times present two research traditions which have conflicting philosophical stances--- the positivist and interpretivist traditions. The positivist tradition thrived under modernism and interpretivism and constructivism are related to the postmodernist framework. These notions are presented briefly to arrive at the philosophical stance for this study.

Traditional thinking was rejected by *Modernism* which considered rational and objective aspects as within its domain. The main thrust was on the examination of the metaphysical existence and universal presence. Within this school of thought objective authentication of thinking and beliefs was of utmost importance and anything which failed to stand such authentication was labelled as superstitious and was considered to impede positive progress.

Within Modernism two particular philosophies found its place:

- *Positivism*: within this paradigm of thought, the scientific method was believed to positively affirm or confirm true knowledge. It rejected knowledge-claims which went beyond observation. Any non-empirical description of the world was unacceptable within this tradition.
- *Rationalism*: This tradition propounded that intellectual and systematic, deductive reasoning is the true path to knowledge.

In modernism, explanations are rational and the analysis of reality is objective.

To summarise, under these philosophical paradigms anything which is unobservable, immeasurable or which cannot be explained following rational thought is considered to be either inexplicable (or beyond present intellectual understanding) or rejected based on justifications which call it as impractical, superstitious and illogical.

Such philosophical paradigms of knowledge seemed unsuitable for the nature of this study. Therefore, ideas in the postmodernist framework were explored to find a holistic and subjective epistemological stance for this research.

*Postmodernism*: There were thinkers who disagreed with the positivist and rationalist views. However, it continues to have an effect on the sciences, both natural and social, and education. This change from the metaphysical to the rational fails to acknowledge elements which are less tangible, less readily observable and more experiential components of human existence. Unlike modernism, *postmodernism* searches for “truth” which involves attempts to understand how people make sense of their world.

Atkinson (2003) has summarised some of the characteristic features of postmodernism which is in no way exhaustive:

- 'Resistance towards certainty and resolution
- Rejection of fixed notions of reality, knowledge, or method;
- Acceptance of complexity, lack of clarity, and multiplicity;
- Acknowledgement of subjectivity, contradiction and irony;
- Irrelevance for traditions of philosophy or morality;
- Deliberate intent to unsettle assumptions and presuppositions;
- Refusal to accept boundaries or hierarchies in ways of thinking;
- Disruption of binaries which define things as either/or.'

Applying postmodern thinking to the field of education allows a rich re-analysis of 'common-sense' notions which may have been taken for granted by teachers, researchers and policy makers. Multiple views and voices are recognised and one has the opportunity to explore the 'margins' rather than the 'centre' which in turn allows spaces for redressal what St Pierre (1997) calls the 'vicious binaries'. These set binaries construct and define existing societal structures which need to be challenged. Therefore, postmodernist ideas can act as research tools for redefining world-view, for reinterpreting what 'is' and for challenging social and political hegemonies within educational research.

One of the criticisms of postmodernism is that it is more of an intellectual word play or 'opening up new imaginaries' in research and interpretation (Scheurich, 1996). Despite such criticism, the ideas within postmodernist framework provide possibilities

which other formal research paradigms fail to do so. Unpredictability and uncertainty is accepted as important aspects of the research context. It opens up the possibility of recognising multiple and contradictory findings as valid research outcomes.

Atkinson (2003) provides the metaphor of a prism to describe postmodernism. She argues that it is not a research method. It is a prism which refracts multiple images of 'reality'. It reflects complexity, and questions certainty. She states that a postmodern approach to research is a methodology of ideas, and involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of ideas.

Contemporary critics refuse to offer easy answers to educational problems. Lather (1999 in Swann and Prat 2007) proposes a view of research as a way of being at risk, rather than a way of being sure or finding answers.

Thus, within *postmodernism* truth is relative, individual meaning making is recognised, and truth evolves as individuals do. The interpretivist paradigm finds its place within postmodernism. Under the *interpretivist paradigm* it is emphasised that to understand people requires the understanding of the interpretations which they give of what they are doing. One needs to know their intentions. Based on observable behaviours alone one cannot construct reality. The behaviours cannot be divorced from their intentions. Thus, under this research tradition researchers talk of subjective meanings of those whom they are researching. In other words, the different understandings and interpretations which the participants bring with them to the situation are of utmost importance.

Another example of postmodernism is constructivism in which reality is seen as something which is constructed by individuals socially.

*Constructivism* or *constructivist* and other related words and phrases according to Mahoney (2005) came to be part of research lexicon as late as beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. Constructivism in its wider sense is more than just a theory of learning. Closely linked to this term is the notion of *constructivist epistemology*. Epistemology refers to consideration and detailed study of knowledge. Epistemologists seek to investigate and understand the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge. Constructivist epistemology is a philosophical approach to investigating the scope, structure and very nature of knowledge which follows a constructivist approach. It is a philosophical perspective taken by some philosophers for studying the nature of scientific knowledge. They consider that scientific knowledge is constructed by scientists and not discovered from the world. Under the constructivist model each member builds an idiosyncratic version of reality based partly on identical experiences but shaped by individual experience and importantly upon an individual's prior knowledge, understanding and experience. Thus, within our research concerns when two teachers are exposed to the same reflective tool they are likely to adopt it differently and have different interpretations of their teaching contexts.

Within constructivism the notion of social constructivism is directly relevant to our research concerns.

Social constructivism in educational research is an influential epistemology and can be contrasted with objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivists see reality as separate from consciousness and suggest that the meaning of an object resides in the object itself. Therefore, consciousness is believed to play the role of recognising that meaning rather than constructing or creating it. Subjectivists argue that there is nothing in the object or referent that allows meaningful interaction instead

consciousness imposes meaning on it. This suggests that different kinds of meanings could be imposed on the same object. Constructivists on the other hand argue that meaning is not created but constructed out of the interplay between consciousness and the object. The object thus has an influence on the meaning individuals give to it. This doesn't refer to an individualistic viewpoint because this epistemological paradigm has the social dimension at its very core.

Within social constructivism emphasis is on the importance of the social context. Social constructivist theory emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding what is experienced in the wider community and in constructing knowledge built on its understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997 in Pritchard and Woollard, 2010). One can see the importance of culture and context given in the theories of Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977) and others.

It is relevant at this point to consider the three aspects of social constructivist thinking: reality, knowledge and learning.

*Reality:* According to social constructivists reality is constructed through shared human social activity. Members of a community create the properties of the world which they share and which they understand in an agreed manner (Kukla, 2000). Thus, reality is not viewed as an entity that is intact and needs to be discovered. Instead it is seen as something to be made by the individual. In other words, reality cannot already exist because each individual will construct their own reality which will not always coincide with the reality of others. Therefore, in practice individual realities will be very similar but there are cases where due to difference in basic experiences and interactions they can be very different.

*Knowledge*: it is a human creation and that it is constructed socially and culturally (Ernest, 1999;Gredler, 1997;Prawat and Floden,1994). Thus, meanings and understanding are created by individuals with the help of social interactions and their interaction with the environment. As reality can vary similarly knowledge of some can differ from that of others.

*Learning*: It is a social process. It is not a process which works at the individual level and is not passive in nature (McMahon, 1997; Pritchard, 2009). When a person gets involved in a social activity whereby new or repeated input is related to pre-existing knowledge and understanding, effective and sustainable learning takes place.

Within the constructivism research tradition it is considered that research can never be observed from the outside. The insider's perspective is therefore given importance in the interpretation of events. Thus, direct experience of participants becomes central to research. Thus, a single context does not exist and generalised empirical results involved in the study of natural sciences do not work in the study of classroom practices where learners and teachers jointly construct meaning.

Therefore, within the constructivist and social constructivist framework creation of knowledge acknowledges the presence of multiple realities based on individual's prior knowledge, understanding and experience. In the context of the present study of teacher's discourse 'social constructivism' seemed to be the appropriate research paradigm. This influential epistemology underpins the use of certain types of educational research strategies of which one is case study. Our epistemological stance guided our selection of case study methodology which will be discussed in detail in further sections.

Thus, the ontological and epistemological stance adopted for this research study can be represented as follows:

*Ontological stance (the nature of reality)*

- Reality is constructed by the individual based on his/her individual interpretation of events.
- There can be multiple realities as one individual's reality may not coincide with that of others due to difference in experiences and interactions.
- Thus, one cannot arrive at a generalised view of single reality.

*Epistemological stance (theory of knowledge)*

- Social Constructivism views knowledge as multi-perspectival. Knowledge is not certain;
- Knowledge is created and constructed by social and cultural interactions (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Prawat and Floden, 1994).

### **3.7.2 Qualitative and Quantitative research**

Based on the above ontological and epistemological assumptions research strategy and tools for data collection were selected. A discussion on qualitative and quantitative ways of conducting research is relevant at this point. The notion of a 'mixed method' is also discussed which has been adopted for this study and the justifications for choosing such a method.

The two major philosophical schools, modernism and postmodernism as discussed in the previous section have resulted in two dominant ways of conducting research to

‘know something’: *quantitative* and *qualitative*. Another research approach which has developed in the last fifteen years is called the *mixed method*.

A research study can be sound irrespective of the kind of data it uses-that is numeric data or non-numeric. If the data are used to scientifically tested theories, ‘they fall within the domain of science’ because ‘science involves arguing from methodologically sound data, but science is agnostic on the issue of whether the data need to be quantitative or qualitative’ (Mayer, 2000:39). There are stark differences and serious arguments regarding the procedures that separate qualitative and quantitative research methodologists. Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) suggest that research in education may often proceed along a continuum from qualitative to quantitative. They provide a small list of general tendencies or defining attributes between them which is presented in Table 7.

<b>Attributes of Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>
View of reality	Objective social reality exists	Reality is socially constructed.
Causality	Causality is a mechanical description among variables	Human intention is involved in explaining causal relationships
Engagement with participants	As little as possible	At times, personally involved
Explanation of the research	The least complicated explanation is the best	Explanations do not necessarily need to be the least complicated
Type of primary analysis of the research	Statistical	Abduction/induction
Hypothesizing	Yes	Yes

**Table 7: General tendencies of quantitative and qualitative research (Schreiber and Asner-Self, 2011)**

Quantitative research refers to approaches that are guided by a set of assumptions that apply the natural science model of research to investigations of the educational world. The focus is on patterns, regularities, causes and consequences in which there is an application of the principles of positivism, that the patterns of the social world have their own 'real' existence. Objectivity is the focus of quantitative research and quantifying the phenomenon under investigation, assigning numbers to ideas or constructs of interest is the main aim. There are two categories of quantitative methodology: experimental and nonexperimental or descriptive. The latter as the name suggests describe some phenomenon using numbers to create a picture of a group or individual. There is no manipulation of a variable. Some of the key features of quantitative research as noted by Morrison (2002) can be summarised as follows:

The emphasis of quantitative research is on the relation between concept formation, observations and measurements. Structured observation and questionnaire surveys are often used in educational research to observe and measure the research problem. Quantitative researchers wish to demonstrate that their findings can be generalised beyond the location of their projects. This addresses concerns about the representativeness of samples or the extent to which experimental findings can be generalised beyond the circumstances of the original experiment. Quantitative researchers agree that research can never be completely value-free but they are especially interested in whether the research can be replicated.

Quantitative research methods consider people as objects of research. Their uniqueness or contexts are not important. Phenomena that are observable through experience can be called valid knowledge. Thus, internal 'states of mind' as an object for research is rejected as it may not be observable and hence not researchable. Scientific knowledge involves collection of 'facts' which can be observed 'out there'

in the educational world and are distinct from the observer. 'Facts' are then used to theorise.

However, many educational researchers have noted that all quantitative methods are not always laden with theory or driven by hypothesis and never entirely value-free. Qualitative research also depends on some intersubjective reality and hence cannot be termed unreal. The two approaches can complement each other. Statistical data can become the stimulus for a detailed qualitative study. Interviews and surveys can produce both qualitative as well as quantitative data. Wellington (2006) has noted that case studies can involve systematic semi-quantitative observations. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) have criticised the polarisation of the two approaches and rejects the idea of connecting any quantitative data to the epistemological stance of positivism.

Qualitative research approaches are based on assumptions about the way the social world operates. The world is seen through the eyes of those who are studied and the focus is on developing concepts and theories that are 'grounded' in multiple stages of data collection. Qualitative researchers tend to study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) define qualitative research as 'multimethod in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.' Qualitative research has also been understood as something which involves the examination of lived experience and seeks to develop alternative criteria for assessing improvement.

Morrison (2002) has discussed the key features of qualitative research. It focuses upon the subjective realities of research participants. Qualitative researchers pay close attention to observation, often described as naturalistic or participant observation. It

involves rich and deep description of individuals, events and settings. Detailed attention is paid to the holistic picture in which the research is situated. The approach involves the notion that the researcher can only make sense of the data if he/she is also able to understand the data in its broader educational, social and historic context. Qualitative researchers recognise that they are part of, rather than separate from the research topics they investigate. Thus, researchers have an impact on participants and participants impact researchers. Reflexivity is at the core of qualitative approaches. Morrison (2002:18) explains:

‘Thus the world of the educational researcher is different from the world of the natural scientist, and all educational research needs to be grounded in people’s experience.’

In education, qualitative research is mostly used for small-scale investigation. Undoubtedly, such research focus allows in-depth exploration, however, questions surrounding empirical or theoretical generalizations from one or a small number of cases is widely debated (Gomm *et al.*,2000). Some writers have argued that the kind of inferences that can be made from the small-scale are different in type than those that might be drawn from quantitative or from large-scale investigation (Yin,1994). Other writers refer to ‘naturalistic generalizations’ (Stake,1978) or wider applications in terms of ‘fitness for purposes’ or ‘transferability’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Bassey (1999) refers to the concept of ‘fuzzy generalization’ that carries an element of uncertainty. ‘It reports something that has happened in one place and it may happen elsewhere. There is a possibility but no surety’ (ibid:52). There are differences among qualitative researchers about the extent to which it is possible to ‘write’ other people’s actions and perspectives as if unaffected by the researcher’s presence. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:19) explain:

‘Once we abandon the idea that the social character of research can be ‘standardised out’ or avoided by becoming ‘a fly on the wall’ or ‘full participant’, the role of the researcher as active participant in the research process becomes clear. He or she is the research instrument *par excellence*.’

Interactive and non-interactive methods are two categories within qualitative research methodologies. The main characteristic feature of interactive inquiry is the engagement, face to face, with the concerned participants. In non-interactive inquiry, there is typically no engagement with participants, but interaction sometimes does occur in historical analysis. Researchers use a variety of approaches to interactive research like ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and critical studies.

Many writers have highlighted the need to carefully distinguish the two types-- qualitative and quantitative research. Morrison (2002) points out that many a times researchers fail to observe the degree of overlap that exists between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thus, qualitative research can also be used to test theories and both quantitative and qualitative approaches can use numerical data.

Having discussed qualitative and quantitative research methods and the overlaps that exist between the two, an attempt is now made to arrive at an appropriate research method for this study.

It was felt that both qualitative and quantitative methods were required to analyse the data. Hence, a mixed method was adopted for the study. Creswell (2012) defines mixed method as ‘a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing qualitative and quantitative data at some stage of research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely.’

Within mixed method research typically four types of mixed method designs are used. They are Explanatory design, Exploratory design, the Triangulation design and the Embedded design.

Explanatory design is used to explain, refine or clarify quantitative results with the help of qualitative findings. Exploratory design is used when a researcher needs to first explore a topic using qualitative data before measuring or testing it quantitatively. Both of them are sequential and linear in nature.

The most complicated design is the Triangulation design as it is not sequential. Instead, in Triangulation design qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously. In this design thrust can be given to either qualitative or quantitative data or equally to both. The mixing of the two data either takes place at the data analysis stage or during the interpretation of results. The researcher can use a number of strategies to analyse the data. One can compare the quantitative results with qualitative findings to confirm or cross validate the findings from the entire study. Another strategy is to transform qualitative data into quantitative data by counting codes, categories, and themes. This is called quantifying. Conversely, quantitative data can be transformed into qualitative data through cluster or factor analysis, known as qualifying. The reporting structure of the Triangulation design is different from the sequential Explanatory and Exploratory designs. A researcher presents the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in separate sections, but combines the interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative findings into the same section, to discuss whether the results from both the sections exhibit convergence or divergence.

The Triangulation design was selected for the present study as the nature of data collection demanded a framework which would allow integration of both qualitative

and quantitative findings at different stages. This design would help in arriving at well-validated and substantiated findings because it counteracts the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another method. A diagrammatic representation of the research methodology is presented in section 3.9

### **3.7.3 Case study method**

For this study the case study method was found to be appropriate. The journey of each teacher participant had to be reported in detail and with descriptions. In order to understand their classroom discourse it was important to understand their experiences and intentions. Thus, the case study method seemed to match the research interests. This section discusses case study method in detail.

Case study methodology involves describing and interpreting events, conditions or situations that occur in the present. Its main purpose is a detailed examination of a specific activity, event, organisation, or person(s). It has an inherent flexibility and can be descriptive, exploratory, longitudinal and multi-site.

A case is located in a particular time and place. Within case studies, there are comparative cases. In this type, the cases which are under consideration have many similar elements but they have a minimum of one feature which is different. Collective cases are an examination of several bounded cases that are similar in numerous specifically identified ways.

Case studies may draw purely from qualitative approaches but using both qualitative and quantitative techniques is also common. As mentioned earlier, case studies can take different forms. Berg (2004) identifies eleven different forms. A case study can be used to explore, to describe, or to explain a phenomenon. Data collection tools that

are used with case study methodology are observation, structured interviews, document analysis, field notes, audio and video tape recordings. Along with these qualitative tools quantitative data collected through questionnaires and surveys can also be included.

Chapelle and Duff (2003:164) define case study specifically for language teacher-researchers as follows, 'In TESOL, a case typically refers to a person, either a learner or a teacher, or an entity, such as a school, a university or a classroom....In language policy research, a case may be a country'. Yin (2003) underlines an important characteristic of qualitative case study which makes it is an effective method for language researchers. It acknowledges multiple realities and discerns various perspectives of the researcher, the case or participant and others, which may or may not converge.

Phillips (1990) states that the primary assumption in qualitative is that there is no absolute 'truth' and two observers may have different interpretation of the same thing. In most qualitative research and specifically educational case studies involve a researcher who is not a disinterested, objective observer. He/she becomes an active participant in the study, meeting, talking with the person/s who make up the case/s. The researcher plays an interventional role which is to be made transparent, his/her biases have to be confronted, the agenda has to be explicitly stated and the nature of his/her interaction with the cases has to be described. Case study researchers believe that if an attempt is made to control the researcher's influence then the case would get decontextualized.

Stake (2005) outlines three broad types of case study. First, he defines the intrinsic case study which focuses purely on one particular case. There is no attempt made to

generalise from the case under study, compare it to other cases or claim that it describes a common problem or similar cases. The thrust is on getting a deep understanding of the case itself. Secondly, he mentions instrumental case study in which a case is studied with the goal to highlight a particular issue, problem or theory. This type of case study requires interpretation, evaluation along with description of the case. Both intrinsic and instrumental case study help in laying the groundwork for future investigation as they provide descriptive information about areas in which less research has been conducted.

The third category defined by Stake is the collective or multiple case studies. Here again one issue, problem or theory is the focus. However, the researcher chooses to study more than one case to throw light on a specific issue as it is believed that by doing so it 'will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorising, about a still larger collection of cases'(Stake, 2005:446).

The present study makes use of the collective or multiple case study method to study the classroom discourse of ESL teachers and it also attempts to compare the experiences of different cases (in-service teachers) to see how their understanding of classroom discourse are similar or different. These cases can be further used to understand a bigger pool of cases for further research.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) explain that the general design of a case study is best represented by a funnel. The start of the study is the wide end when the researcher explores possible places and people who might be the subject and source of data, assess the feasibility of the data sources. This is followed by data collection, reviewing and exploring it and making decisions about where to go with the study. There is a continual modification in the design and procedures and then the work

develops a focus. The data collection and research activities then narrow to subjects, materials, and topics. Thus, case studies are characterised by broad exploratory beginnings and then followed by focussed data collection and analysis.

A few issues related to case studies need to be discussed. One is the issue of generalisability which will be discussed in detail in section 3.8.2. Researchers using case study method either look for a 'typical' situation (one that is similar to most others of the type) or an 'unusual' one (an exceptional case). Researchers who choose the 'typical case' are concerned with generalisability of results.

Case study researchers often highlight the importance of 'capturing' reality by representing the case authentically, by using the participants' own accounts of views and events. In some cases, this may involve suppressing the voice of the researcher. Questions about whose voices are 'real' have been asked not only by those who follow the methods of the positivist paradigm but also by constructivists and some postmodernists who deny the existence of any 'authentic situation' or case that is independent of investigations of it by the researcher. This brings up the question whether the researcher can ever present a case authentically in the purest sense of the term. Scott and Morrison (2007) have pointed out that in educational research doubts have been raised in relation to the particularity of individual case studies. Instead experts have suggested that illustrative case studies need to be promoted, especially where the illustrative case studies of 'effective' or 'good' practice can be highlighted and then modelled by the less 'good' or less 'effective'.

Ethical concerns are always an integral part of case studies. As case studies involve small number of participants and the research focus is almost always intensive, a number of agreed ethical guidelines need to be established. Regarding reporting in

case study, Stake (1995:240) concludes that ‘more will be pursued than volunteered’ and ‘less will be reported than learned’.

*Internal sampling* within the case study context refers to the decisions made by the researcher concerned with:

- selecting the subjects for the study
- what time of the day to observe
- and how to go about with the process of data collection

The selection of *key informants* who are more willing to participate in the research also forms a part of internal sampling. *Time sampling* refers to the time that is chosen to visit the place of research. Another research design issue involves the amount of time one should set aside for a case study. These issues pertaining to our study have been discussed in section 3.9.

In order to be able to capture reality as closely as possible thick description of events has been done wherever necessary in this study. Thick description refers to the rich, vivid descriptions and interpretations of the researcher as he/she collects data. It allows the researcher to describe the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies and motivations that characterise the participants, research settings and events. The term thick description was coined by Ryle (1971 in Ponterotto, 2006) and expanded upon by Geertz (1973) in order to describe the ethnographer’s task of describing the ‘web of significance’ (Geertz, 1973:5) that forms culture and individual’s relation to it. Thus, thick descriptions allow investigators to understand why the participants act and react in particular ways by describing the context and the participants in great detail.

A case study report often involves narrative and it may become inevitable to give it a personal tone as the researcher tries to tell the stories of the participants and portray them as real people. Therefore, within case study method the use of narratives helps the researcher to clearly discuss the experiences and intentions of the participants.

Keeping in line with the ontological and epistemological stances of this study which sees reality as multiple, contradictory and changing, and knowledge as having multiple perspectives, the case study method was adopted. As case studies are well suited for exploring issues rich in context, it served the purpose of understanding the context embedded ESL situation of this study.

#### **3.7.4 Reflective conversations**

For this study reflective conversation framework was used to capture the inner thoughts of the participants and facilitate reflection on their classroom discourse.

Reflective conversation framework (Ghaye and Ghaye,1998) supports a discourse which involves responsive interchange between acting and thinking and provides an insight into the data of reflective practice. Schon (1987) describes reflective conversation as a conversation which one has with the situation. It allows teachers to interrogate what they do, question the educational values and goals which give 'shape form and purpose' (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998:19) to what they do and learn from their experiences. The reflective conversation framework can be located at the very heart of the improvement process. It can challenge and disturb a given set of educational values and goals which teachers consider as important. However, it can also help teachers to reaffirm those values and goals that they perceive as important in defining the kind of teacher they want to be.

Smyth (1992:295) claims that teachers need to engage with some fundamental questions to engage in reflection:

Describe- What do you do?

Inform- What does it mean?

Confront- How did I come to be like this?

Reconstruct- How might I do things differently?

These above questions would provoke different patterns of thinking and hence different levels of reflection. The first question, 'What do I do?' calls for a reflective process -- an analysis of actions. It has the potential to develop one's skills and capabilities and therefore is formative in nature. Such questions which are analytical help in breaking down what one already knows and allow to relook at existing knowledge structures and eventually help to solve a problem.

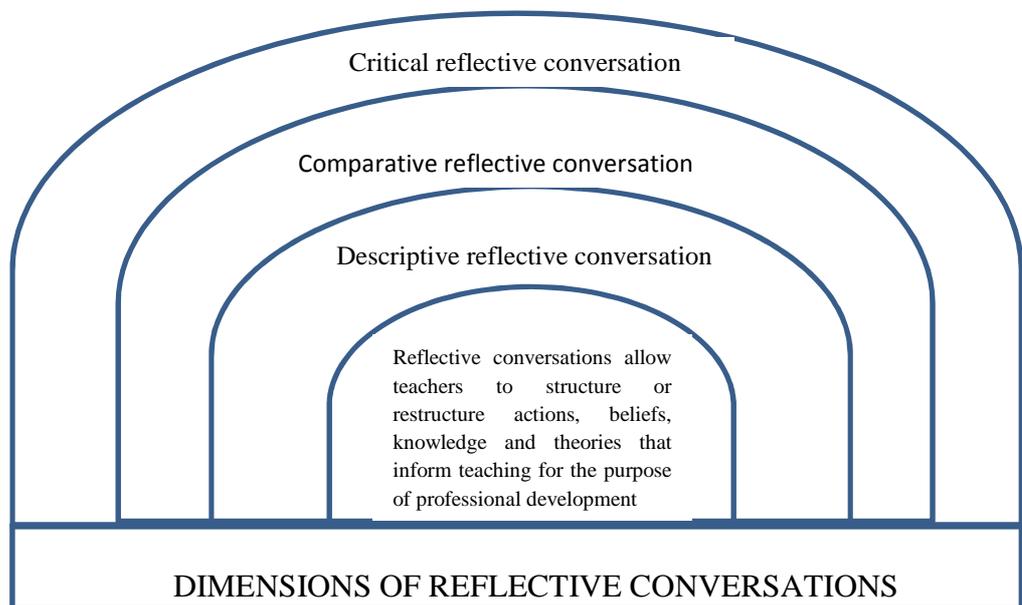
The question, 'How might I do things differently?' requires a reflective self-evaluation of a particular type of performance using criteria against which judgements can be made. This is summative in nature and aims to develop the goals and standards one has set for oneself. Evaluative questions help in using one's knowledge to form judgements and to justify or defend those judgements. Such questions involve more complex thinking and reasoning skills. The terms analytical reflection and evaluative reflection were used by Cowan (1998) to distinguish between these two types of discourse. The question 'how did I come to be like this?' appeals to the affective aspect of teacher's practice, and discourse arising from this question can reveal insights into one's disposition to enquiry.

It is apparent that in order to interrogate and understand one's experiences one needs to engage in different types of questioning.

## **Narrative enquiry**

In recent decades narrative enquiry has evolved as a tool to capture the stories of teachers in their journey to become more effective practitioners. Narrative enquiry opens up a space where the voices of teachers can be heard as they speak about their experiences of professional learning and professional lives in education (e.g. Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Sparks Langer, 1992). Researchers have challenged the traditional view of teacher education as ‘training’ which undermines theory which evolves from personal experiences grounded in reality. In fact, it gives importance to gaining proficiency in specific techniques or strategies.

Thus, reflective conversations are embedded in narrative enquiry and can be of different types depending on the types of questions asked. The following figure shows the different types of reflective conversations which in turn can be further connected to the different levels of reflection.



**Figure 3. Qualitative distinctions between reflective conversations (adapted from Zwozduak-Myers, 2012:16)**

**Descriptive reflective conversations**

Concrete experiences form the base of this type of discourse as one examines and frames aspects of one’s own classroom practice. It requires the teacher to go back to a previous experience and give a detailed description of the same. It takes the form of a retrospective personal account of teaching (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985). This type of discourse supports the notion that each individual experiences the world differently and the sense of reality can take different forms. Descriptive reflective conversations allow the participants to look for patterns and trends that may surface as one tries to make sense of one’s own teaching. Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:25) lists a set of questions which would enable an individual to examine the situational, context-specific nature of one’s experience by engaging in questions such as:

‘What was taught?

How was it taught?

Did learners achieve the intended learning outcomes?

What teaching strategies were effective, or ineffective?

How do I know?

What does this mean?

How does this make me feel?

How might I do things differently next time?’

Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:25)

Descriptive reflective conversations can be used to bring out implicit thoughts for open discussion. It is expected to help individuals to arrive at a pedagogical vocabulary that would emerge from shared meanings and experiences (Ghaye and Ghaye, 1998). Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:25) writes ‘Teachers must account for their actions and provide reasons why they responded to a particular teaching situation in a particular way with a particular group of learners in a particular context at a particular moment in time, for example, if the intended learning outcomes were achieved by some pupils, yet not by others, they must question why this was the case.’ As one analyses the actions by asking relevant questions, problems are identified as part of descriptive reflective conversations. Then, one further then tries to understand what the implications are for one’s own future teaching.

### **Comparative reflective conversations**

This type of conversation requires an individual to modify the focus of his/her reflection ‘in light of multiple perspectives, alternative views and possibilities, research findings from literature and one’s own engagement with prior experiences’ (Zwozdiak-Myers,2012:25). Comparative reflective conversations as the name

suggests encourage teachers to relate their ‘personal assumptions, beliefs, theories, values and conceptions of teaching to that of others’ (ibid). In this process the participant is involved in meaning making and moves from one experience into the next with deeper understanding ‘of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas’ (Rodgers, 2002:845). Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:25) lists a set of questions which would allow teachers to engage in comparative reflective conversations:

‘What alternative strategies might I use in my teaching?

What are the advantages or disadvantages of using particular strategies for diverse learners?

How might colleagues and or learners explain what is happening in my classroom?

What research enables me to gain further insights into this matter?

In what ways can I improve the ineffective parts of my practice?

Having established learning objectives, in what ways can these be accomplished?

How do colleagues accomplish these same goals?

For each alternative perspective, whose learning needs are addressed and whose are not?’

Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:25)

These types of questions bring forth a range of alternative choices and allow teachers to deliberate upon them. Teachers also realise that knowledge claims, contain elements of uncertainty. Therefore, they can expect to have opinions, think through problems and express themselves in a valid manner.

### **Critical reflective conversations**

Critical thinking is at the heart of this type of reflective conversation. It is based on the assumption that knowledge claims cannot be made with certainty. ‘Teachers make

judgements that are ‘most reasonable’ and about which they are ‘relatively certain’ based on the evaluation of available data.’(ibid)

Critical reflective conversations consist of questions which look for alternative options for one’s teaching in order to consider the implications behind alternative perspectives. Participants explore various alternatives and try to postpone judgement till they have explored multiple possibilities.

Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:26) lists a set of questions which would allow teachers to engage in critical reflective conversations:

‘What are the implications of using particular strategies in my teaching when viewed from alternative perspectives?’

On the basis of these perspectives and their implications, what strategies would be the most effective in helping learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes?’

Are these particular learning outcomes appropriate for the diverse range of learners within this class? ‘How do I know? Where is the evidence?’

Why select this particular strategy for this particular group of learners on this particular occasion within this particular context rather than an alternative? What criteria can support my decision-making?’

How does my choice of objectives, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment strategies reflect the cultural, ethical, ideological, moral, political and social purposes of schooling?’

Zwozdiak-Myers (2012:26)

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) state that complex issues related to power, politics as they are associated with schools need to be understood in order to engage in critical discourse about one’s practice. Asking why the educational, ideological, political and professional systems (of which one is an integral part) constrain or empower the

participants (Moon, 2005) amount to critical conversations. This has the potential to give rise to ‘new understandings of previously taken for granted assumptions about practice’ (Grimmett *et al.*, 1900 in Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012)) and lead to ‘renewed perspective’ (Jay and Johnson, 2002 in Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012).

Based on the above discussion the reflective conversations framework can be represented as follows:

<b>Type of reflective conversation</b>	<b>Question types</b>	<b>Qualitative dimension of reflection</b>
Descriptive reflective conversations	What was taught? How was it taught? Did learners achieve the intended learning outcomes? What teaching strategies were effective, or ineffective? How do I know? What does this mean? How does this make me feel? How might I do things differently next time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construct a pedagogical vocabulary of shared meanings and understandings</li> <li>▪ Retrospective personal account of teaching</li> <li>▪ Search for patterns and trends that may emerge as one tries to make sense of one’s own teaching</li> <li>▪ Problems are identified</li> </ul>
Comparative reflective conversations	What alternative strategies can be used in my teaching? What are the advantages or disadvantages of using particular strategies for diverse learners? How might colleagues and or learners explain what is happening in my classroom? What research enables me to gain further insights into this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflection in light of multiple perspectives, alternative views, research findings and one’s own engagement with prior experiences</li> <li>▪ Teachers relate personal assumptions, beliefs, theories, values and conceptions of teaching to that of others</li> <li>▪ Bring forth a range of alternative choices and</li> </ul>

	<p>matter?</p> <p>In what ways can I improve the ineffective parts of my practice?</p> <p>Having established learning objectives, in what ways can these be accomplished?</p> <p>How do colleagues accomplish these same goals?</p>	<p>allow teachers to deliberate upon them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers also realise that knowledge claims, contain elements of uncertainty and can hence challenge them</li> </ul>
<p>Critical reflective conversations</p>	<p>What are the implications of using particular strategies in my teaching when viewed from alternative perspectives?</p> <p>On the basis of these perspectives and their implications, what strategies would be the most effective in helping learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes?</p> <p>Are these particular learning outcomes appropriate for the diverse range of learners within this class? ‘How do I know? Where is the evidence?’</p> <p>Why select this particular strategy for this particular group of learners on this particular occasion within this particular context rather than an alternative? What criteria can support my decision-making?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical thinking is at the heart of this type</li> <li>▪ knowledge claims cannot be made with certainty</li> <li>▪ complex issues related to power, politics as they are associated with schools need to be understood</li> <li>▪ has the potential to give rise to ‘new understandings of previously taken for granted assumptions about practice’ and lead to ‘renewed perspectives’</li> </ul>

	<p>How does my choice of objectives, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment strategies reflect the cultural, ethical, ideological, moral, political and social purposes of schooling?</p>	
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Based on the above framework of reflective conversations, reflective feedback sessions were conducted with the teacher-participants to enable them to engage in reflection on their own classroom discourse.

This framework is in line with the idea of depth of reflection discussed in the previous chapter. In chapter four, the different levels of reflection identified in this study will be highlighted following the above framework.

### **3.8 Challenges and considerations**

In this research a number of challenges need to be highlighted. The researcher had to be aware of a number of ethical concerns in order to ensure that the validity of the study was not hampered. In this section, issues relating to validity, generalisability and ethical considerations will be discussed.

#### **3.8.1 Issues of validity**

The research questions posed in this study guided the collection and analysis of data. However, a number of concerns related to validity of the work can be discussed.

In order to increase the degree of validity, mixed method design was used which ensured that both qualitative and quantitative analysis was done to validate the

hypotheses. A triangulation research design was chosen keeping in mind that triangulation of data (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Silverman, 2000) helps to establish validity of research findings in qualitative research. Triangulation ensured that multiple sources of evidence were used (interviews, interactions, classroom observations, questionnaires, discussions, journal entries and so on).

However, the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study state that reality and experiences are multi-dimensional and deeply context bound. Following these assumptions one can argue that the set of events and interactions which is reported in the study may have different meanings in different contexts. However, the patterns and trends found in the quantitative data were used to support and cross validate the qualitative claims.

The research project aimed at studying the authentic classroom situation; however, it needs to be acknowledged that what was studied was a ‘classroom under observation’. The presence of the researcher and thus its effect on the interactions cannot be ignored. The data was collected using techniques which elicit self-reporting and introspection on the part of the teachers. Stimulated recalls were used specifically to preserve the spontaneity and originality of the situation.

Certain factors which had an impact on the participants’ responses include:

- Teacher’s responses changed due to the effect of the study as a whole
- Changes in teacher’s classroom strategies and discourse because of the reflective conversations and interactions with the researcher

- Conscious effort made by the teacher to make changes in his/her classroom interactions because of the interactions, presence of the researcher and audio taping.
- The data collected under situations when the researcher was physically present in the classroom was analysed keeping in mind the ‘observer effect’.

However, to encourage teachers to be more independent and spontaneous, in the latter half of the study the researcher decided not be present in the classroom to reduce ‘observer effect’. Thus, teachers were encouraged to audio record their own classroom discourse as per their convenience and choice. As this study aims at promoting meaningful reflection on classroom discourse it tried to use ‘collaboration’ as an important principle. Thus, changes in teachers’ perceptions and responses as a result of collaboration were also found in this study.

As this research work uses a qualitative framework with quantitative support, one can argue that questions of validity as understood in positivist paradigm may not be applicable to this study. Questions like external and internal validity, reliability and objectivity are considered inappropriate for a study of such nature. In reflective practice research using narratives (reflective conversations) issues of access, honesty, authenticity, familiarity, transferability and economy are considered relevant factors to evaluate the validity and reliability of the study.

Thus, sources of data (transcripts, research notes etc.) need to be made accessible to the readers; Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that trustworthiness of a human instrument is assessable in much the same way as any ‘paper-and-pencil instrument’. Analysing critical incidents allows the participants to understand the unexpected or not understood aspects of classroom discourse. Transferability is another factor which

governs case study research. The researcher needs to provide adequate scope to facilitate another person to apply its findings in a different context thereby allowing that person to make comparisons of similarity and differences. Economy in presentation of data is achieved by using appropriate codes and themes which helps the reader to understand the structure of the data.

### **3.8.2 Generalisability of results**

For some case study researchers, the aim is to draw conclusions that may be applied more widely than the case itself. One argument is that case study draws different kinds of generalisations (logical, theoretical, analytical) as compared to positivist research which draws from statistical analyses only (Mitchell, 2000 in Scott and Morrison, 2007). A second position would be that case study does not have to make any claims for generalization. The key issue is how readers of case study make use of case study research outcomes and for varied purposes. Stake (2005) describes 'naturalistic generalization'. Lincoln and Guba (2000) highlight the importance of transfer of findings from one setting to another on the basis of best fit for purpose. This notion of transferability has been suggested as an alternative to generalizability. Traditional or in other words quantitative notions of generalizability have been criticised on a number of grounds.

Bassey (1999:51 in Scott and Morrison, 2007) discusses that terms like 'exploratory' and 'explanatory' case study research can lead to 'fuzzy propositions' or 'generalizations'. These are general statements 'with built-in uncertainties...an appropriate concept for [case study] research in areas like education where human complexity is paramount' Bassey (ibid)

Wolcott(1995:17) argues that ‘each case is unique, but not so unique that we cannot learn from it and apply its lessons more generally’. The value of a case study is in demonstrating how general principles operate in practice. They are useful in generalizing theoretical positions than make generalisation about populations.

Therefore, results of a case study do not aim to ‘prove’ anything in the positivist sense. They do not establish laws that will be confirmed or discarded through further study. However, further study has the potential to deepen or modify the understanding of a particular case. The results of a case study may be used in two ways. First, they may be used to bring positive changes to the present condition or practice for that particular case. Secondly, the results may be extended to other similar cases. Thus, a case study researcher doesn’t aim for generalizability and theory testing like a quantitative researcher does.

This study doesn’t aim at making generalizations about classroom interaction but it seeks to understand the existing classroom interactional patters of the participants and further explore ways to promote self- reflection by analysing one’s own classroom discourse. It uses the revised version of the SETT framework (closely relating to teachers’ contexts) to understand how and to what extent they can enable teachers to engage in different levels of reflection. We also seek to explore if such reflection allows teachers to engage in ‘theory building’ and lead to professional development. The findings of this study have implications for the Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk framework and to strengthen the links between the various stages of the reflection process. It also aims to understand the links between the different levels of reflection and the different stages of implementation of the framework. This is done by using ESL teachers as cases for investigation.

### **3.8.3 Ethical concerns**

Duncan and Watson (2010) argue that ‘race, gender, culture and other social factors are so central to people’s identity that they need to be considered throughout the inquiry to ensure that the research benefits not only science and society but also to the individual subjects as well.’ They state that research ethics allow the researcher to understand their own position in the study and be sensitive to the individuals who participated.

With regard to our study as we went to schools to interact with teacher participants the researcher as an ‘outsider’ had to be vigilant to the ethical considerations. Transparency, being unobtrusive, confidentiality, anonymity and participatory ethics were some of the ethical considerations adopted for this study.

#### **Transparency**

Transparency deals explicitly with what happens between the means (methodology and methods) and ends (impacts and outcomes) of the research process. Although research participants may not fully appreciate the issues at stake and the researcher may not be open and honest in detailing the research purpose, methods and process because disclosure may affect the validity of the findings. However, writings in social research suggest that for ethical considerations researchers need to remain open about their research practices. For this study, a middle path which adopted. The researcher spend time with the participants to understand the research problem and was honest about the struggles that were there to deal with it. A transparent stance was adopted which involved dialogues with the teachers acknowledging the limitations of the research project. There were points of impossibility in the research process which revealed the reality of the situation for the participants. Thus, such transparency only

opened up possibilities for research and social change. While arriving at the revised tool for self-evaluation of teacher talk and encouraging teachers to reflect on their classroom discourse, few situations were characterised by contradiction, conflict and discomfort. However, these were acknowledged as a natural part of the research process and were seen as situations for learning about and from the participants.

### **Being unobtrusive**

The nature of the study required the presence of the researcher in the schools for a period of approximately five months (September 2014 to February 2015) where the teachers who participated worked. During the course of the study some of the teachers wanted the researcher to teach a few lessons or parts of lessons in collaboration. This enabled the researcher to make the transition as an ‘outsider’ to ‘insider’ in the schools and interact with the teachers almost like colleagues. This helped to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual cooperation so that the data collected has fewer biases of the researcher as an ‘outsider’. When classes were observed and audio recorded the researcher sat in the last bench so as to be least obtrusive. Towards the later part of the study sometimes the teachers were encouraged to independently record their lessons in the absence of the researcher to promote teacher initiative and to see how the teacher interprets the lesson without the intervention of the researcher. For the initial few weeks the teachers and the learners were both conscious of the researcher’s presence. However, when the researcher took up the role of a co-teacher and repeated interactions with the teachers and learners this was no longer a matter of concern as they ‘got used’ to the presence of the researcher. Interviews and discussions were conducted in spaces like meeting room, empty classrooms, lawns so that other teachers were not disturbed in the staff room.

### **Teacher-researcher association**

All the eight teachers who agreed to be observed and take part in the study were personally not known to the researcher when the study began. Moreover, the teachers amongst themselves were also formal. A study which required workshops, discussions and reflecting on one's classroom discourse to improve classroom interaction could have been very threatening as it demands teachers to be critical of their own classroom interaction. Hence, an environment which is relaxed, comfortable and trusting is essential. As mentioned earlier, the principle of transparency was adhered to which involved revealing research objectives and the aims of the research project. During the workshops all the teachers came together as a group, however, for the reflective feedback sessions teachers met the researcher in smaller groups owing to practical convenience. For instance, the TGTs were comfortable meeting together as they shared a more personal relationship amongst themselves and they taught similar classes. They could relate to the content of the lessons and also freely share their observations. Moreover, these teachers found common free slots and it made it convenient to meet them together. The PGTs met the researcher as a group for the reflective interviews and conversations. They taught similar classes and shared a greater degree of collegiality. However, in the workshops where all came together allowed them to mix more freely and as the study progressed a greater degree of cooperation was seen.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is another ethical principle which qualitative researchers need to take into consideration. It is now an accepted norm that researchers need to offer confidentiality and anonymity to the participants. However, this stance has also been

questioned. Some have argued that this notion assumes that the researcher is superior to the participants and thus participants are seen as vulnerable and less powerful. Thus, they need to conceal their identity. Macfarlane (2009:21) has argued that ‘the notion that participants are vulnerable is a patronising assumption’. It has been pointed out by Yu (2008) that many participants in qualitative research studies, are far from ‘vulnerable’. Watson & Amoah (2007) has observed that in some cases the participant is equal in social status or socially more powerful than the researcher.

For this study, the participants were aware that the classroom data collected, the interactions during the workshops, discussions, the reflective conversations and interviews would be reported for the purpose of research and they may also be quoted directly. They were however offered anonymity considering it is a case study research which closely reports the process of each participant. All the six teachers expressed that they would not want the researcher to reveal their name while reporting the process. Thus, the names of the teacher participants were changed for the sake of reporting.

### **Participatory ethics**

Kotze and Myburg (2004 in Savin-Baden & Major,2010) describe participatory ethics as ‘the right things to do’ by making the ‘researched’ equal partners in a social inquiry. Transformation is facilitated by the researcher by respecting both particularity and diversity. The relationship between the researcher and the participants is dynamic and it requires constant negotiation to ‘deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and ensure reciprocity (ibid).’ Participatory ethics considers participation not as a step in the research process but a

description of the process. Therefore, researchers' attempt is to use their knowledge and position to ensure that participation in research is beneficial to everyone involved.

For this study the principles of participatory ethics were found to be relevant. As the researcher had to involve the teachers in reflective practices it was important to gain their trust and convince them that they would benefit from the process. Teaching materials were shared with the teachers in the area of teaching grammar communicatively, using newspapers innovatively, and teaching writing using the process approach, grammar games, and integration of skills in language teaching. These areas were identified by the teachers during the workshops and they wanted resource materials pertaining to them. Inputs were given pertaining to English Language Teaching and skills based language teaching through workshops. These ensured reciprocity as the teachers felt they have some tangible benefits to look forward to from the research project. It also ensured a holistic approach as the teachers' classroom interaction is intrinsically linked to their methodology and ways of handling textbooks/materials. Repeated interactions and dialogues helped to promote equality and an environment of mutual trust and reciprocity. In the beginning of the research process, the relationship between the researcher and participants was very formal which hindered open discussions and interactions. However, the conscious implementation of participatory ethics helped the researcher to create favourable conditions for conducting the workshops and discussions with the teachers.

### **3.9 Overall research design of the study**

To understand the classroom interactional processes of the teachers their classroom discourse was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The number of teacher and

learner turns and the number of words exchanged by the teacher and the learners were analysed quantitatively. The dominant interactional patterns were understood with the help of qualitative analysis of the class recordings. The use of strategies like confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, reformulation, turn completion and back tracking were analysed keeping in view the local teaching and learning contexts and required qualitative validation.

The conversations between the teachers and the researcher and the stimulated recalls along with reflective feedback interviews have been presented in the form of case studies. This forms a major part of the data which was analysed using qualitative methods.

To study the classroom interactional patterns and then to evolve context sensitive tools for self-evaluation of teacher talk to encourage reflection among teachers, a space had to be created to report the teacher's experiences and intentions. This study involves thick descriptions of events, participants and the teaching and learning context. Moreover, teachers' reflections unearthed their pedagogic intentions and justifications for employing certain teaching strategies. Considering these factors the case study method seemed appropriate for this inquiry.

In the first half of the research project eight ESL classes were audio recorded and observed. These classes were analysed closely using quantitative and qualitative tools. The number of words exchanged, teacher turns, learner turns, topic management were analysed quantitatively. However, the overall interactional space and the Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) of the teacher had to be analysed by reporting minute details in the light of the SETT framework. The identification of new modes was done

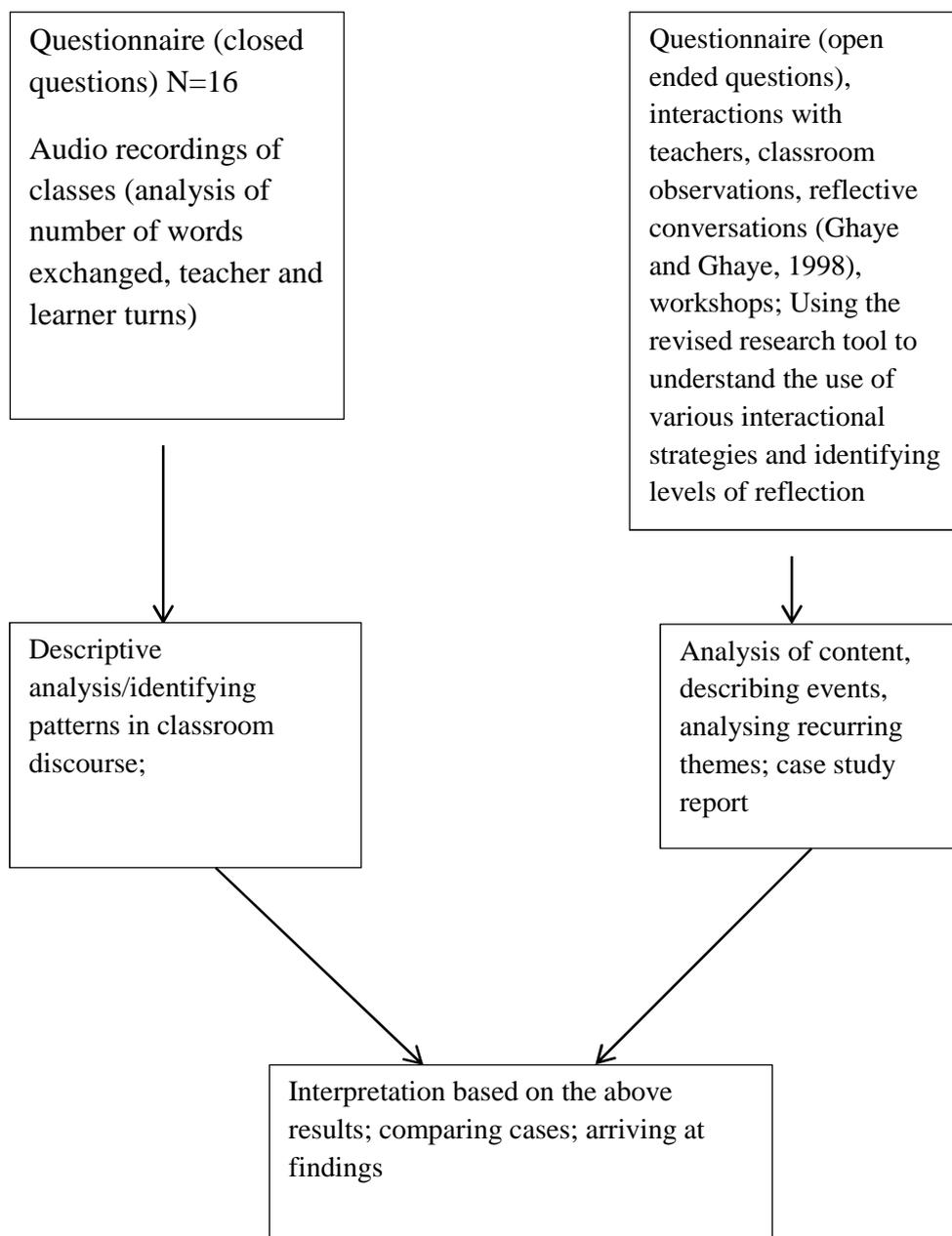
based on the rich descriptions of these classes and based on the discussions with the teachers revised SETT tools were proposed.

In the second half of the research the teachers reflected on their classroom discourse using the revised SETT tool trying to understand the link between their classroom language and pedagogic goals and thereby improving the interactional space of their lessons. These events have been reported based on the 'reflective feedback interviews' (following the reflective conversations framework within narrative enquiry), 'classroom observation records', discussions and events which took place during the workshops. At this stage evolved the Reflective Framework for Classroom Discourse (RFCD) which connects the various stages of the revised SETT tool with different levels of reflection. The case study method allowed the researcher to follow each teacher's journey of professional development closely and understand their context in the light of their intentions and experiences.

The case studies yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was obtained from questionnaire responses and the initial analysis of the classroom discourse which was audio recorded. The qualitative data consisted of reflective feedback interviews, classroom observation reports, audio recordings of the classroom interactions and the discussions with the teachers. Teachers were also encouraged to analyse critical incidents which allowed both the researcher and teachers to experience the process of change.

## Quantitative

## Qualitative



**Figure 4: Triangulation design procedures (Adapted from Lopez and Tashakkori, 2006)**

For the purposes of internal sampling for the case study the researcher kept a few criteria in consideration while selecting the main participants of the study. Initially all the TGT and PGT teachers of English were approached for questionnaire filling and

informal discussions. Based on the following criteria the final internal sampling for selection of subjects was done:

- willingness to participate in the study
- intrinsic motivation
- areas of concern in teaching
- educational qualifications and years of experience
- schooling and mother tongue

The two schools selected for this study were double shift schools as mentioned in section 3.3. Therefore, the researcher visited the schools in the morning from 8:10 am to 12:30 pm for the morning shift and from 12:30 to 4:30 pm for the afternoon shift on every alternate days. The researcher got access to these schools from the month of September 2014 till February 2015. In between there was a short winter break which allowed the researcher to work with the participants at their own pace. Workshops were conducted during the vacation as well in order to balance work load for the teachers. In the month of November the teachers were busy with evaluation but didn't have regular classes. That time was utilised for the interactions that took place in the first phase (data collected in the month of October).

Initially the researcher got permission to visit the schools for a span of four months. However, as the study progressed two more months were extended. Even after the case study was formally over the researcher was in touch with the teacher participants to constantly clarify and gather relevant information for writing the report.

In order to be able to capture reality as closely as possible thick description of events has been done wherever necessary in this study. Thick description refers to the rich, vivid descriptions and interpretations of the researcher as he/she collects data. It allows the researcher to describe the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies and motivations that characterise the participants, research settings and events. The term thick description was coined by Ryle (1971) and expanded upon by Geertz (1973) as a way to describe the ethnographer's task of describing the 'web of significance' (Geertz,1973:5) that forms culture and individual's relation to it. Thus, thick descriptions allow investigators to understand why the participants act and react in particular ways by describing the context and the participants in minute detail.

This section will be concluded by stating the various stages of the study.

Stage 1: Review of literature and attempts made to understand SETT framework and the process of reflection

Stage 2: Meeting with KVS officer to identify schools and seeking permission from respective school principals

Stage 3: Questionnaires administered and eight teachers identified for the study

- Personal information
- Information about the school where they work
- Educational qualification
- Their present understanding of their classroom interaction
- Professional development activities

Stage 4: Discussions, interviews, classroom observations

Stage 5: Analysis of classroom data, transcribing data, identifying patterns of classroom interaction and areas of modification within the SETT framework

Stage 6: Workshops and discussions with teachers to discuss the alternative SETT framework and familiarise them with the mutually agreed terminologies to talk about classroom interaction

Stage 7: Individual and collaborative intervention using the revised SETT framework to engage teachers in reflection and thereby arriving at the Reflective Framework for Classroom discourse (RFCD)

Stage 8: Case studies and analysis and interpretation of the cases

Stage 9: Reporting findings and pedagogic implications

The above stages represent the developmental phases of the study. They guided the investigation of the research questions discussed in section 3.5. The study is designed to explore the possibility of using the SETT framework in the Indian context with a set of teachers from diverse backgrounds. It also takes into consideration of the teacher's context sensitive factors and in line with the teacher's feedback attempts to evolve alternative ways of implementing the framework. The link between the different stages of the revised tool and different levels of reflection is identified and then evolved the Reflective Framework for Classroom Discourse (RFCD). Through reflection on one's classroom discourse the teachers found ways to strengthen the links between their pedagogic goals and language use in the classroom.

### **3.10 Profile of the study**

The TGTs and PGTs are in-service teachers have similar educational backgrounds and work experience. Their positions as TGTs and PGTs are well defined. They all

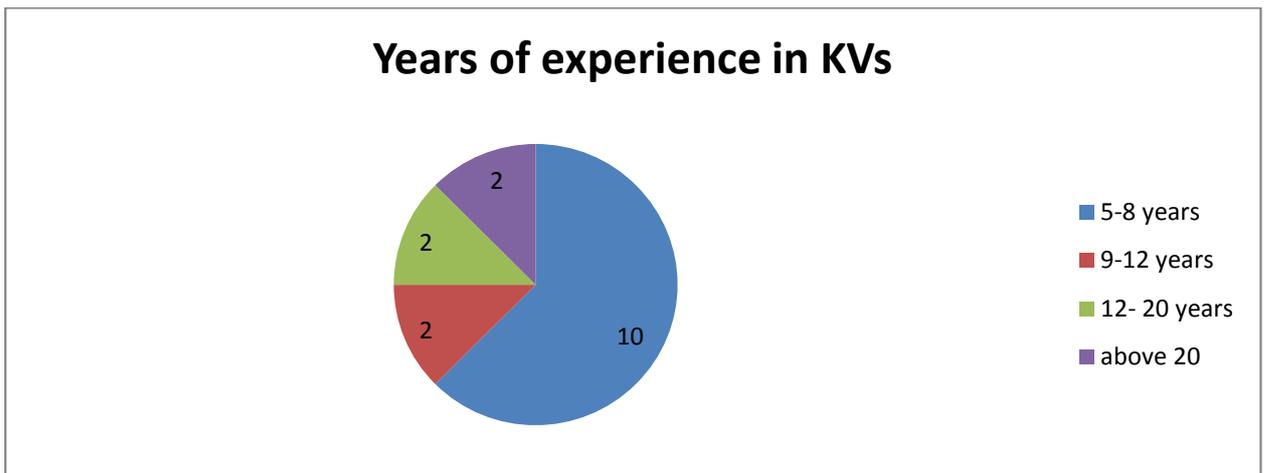
have at least five years of experience or more. Moreover, they deal with a varied teaching and learning context as they are transferred to different states across the country. As the nature of their engagement is long term and their teaching context is within the several KVs, the institutional goals, objectives remain constant across the KV schools. As this study ultimately aims at promoting professional development it was felt that teachers with long term, stable employment like that of KVs qualified to be desirable subjects as there is an obvious interest to trace one's growth in the organisation

Before actual data was collected a pilot study was conducted to identify teachers for the case studies. Through the responses to questionnaires (discussed in section 4.2) were obtained from 16 English teachers (teaching in the above mentioned schools from grade VI to XII. Based on the responses of these teachers, eight teachers were identified for the study, considering factors like their willingness to participate in the study, intrinsic motivation, areas of concern in teaching, educational qualifications, schooling and mother tongue. Of the eight teachers, two opted out of the study after three weeks of data collection as they felt hard pressed for time and overwhelmed with the class observations and other activities what were lined up for the study. The final study therefore reports six case studies. The classroom interactional patterns identified in the initial half of the study that fed into the revised SETT framework(s) which served as the main tool(s) for the study were based on the recording of the classes of these eight teachers.

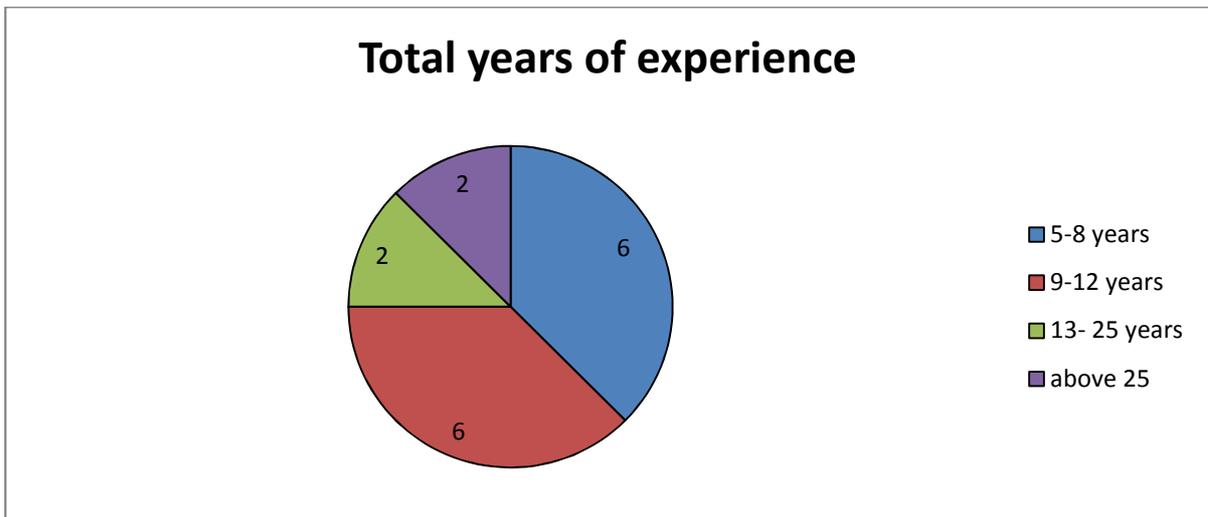
The following charts show the profile of the sixteen participants from whom the initial data was collected through a questionnaire:

### Gender, teaching experience and qualifications

The sample consisted of four male teachers and twelve female teachers. All the teachers had more than five years of teaching experience in Kendriya Vidyalayas. The first pie chart shows their teaching experience only in KVs and the second pie chart shows their overall teaching experience.



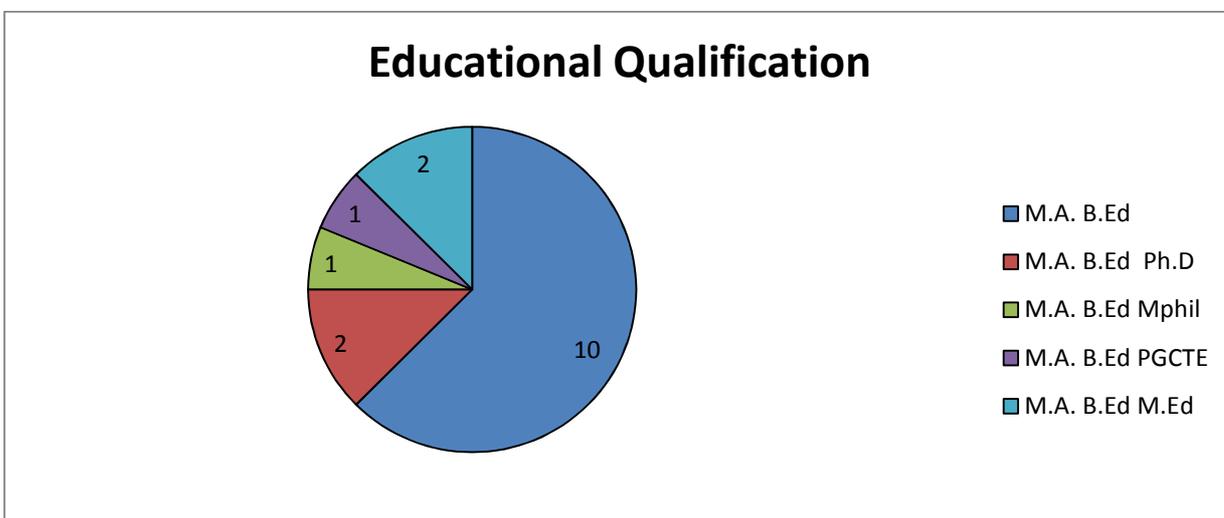
**Figure 5: Pie-chart 1 years of experience in KVs**



**Figure 6: Pie-chart 2 Over all teaching experience**

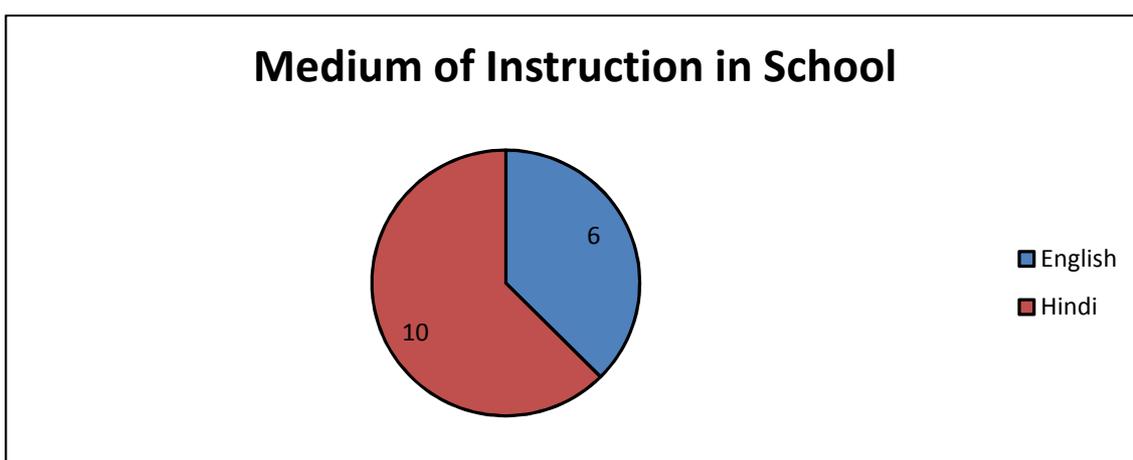
All the teachers had a post graduate degree in English. Two of the teachers had a PhD degree in English Literature. One of them had an M.Phil degree. Two of them had an

M.Ed. degree. One of the senior teachers had a PGCTE (Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching English) from CIEFL, Hyderabad. All of them had a B.Ed. degree as it one of the compulsory requirements for teaching at the school level.



**Figure 7: Pie-chart 3 Educational Qualification**

Out of the 16 teachers, 6 teachers had English as the medium of instruction in their school years and 10 teachers had Hindi as their medium of instruction in school. The mother tongue of all the teachers was Hindi.



**Figure 8: pie chart 4 Medium of instruction in school**

### **3.11 Research tools**

The research questions presented in section 3.5 guided the construction of the tools for the study. A study of this nature required the use of tools which could capture the teachers' spontaneous thoughts and justifications about their classroom interactional strategies. In the beginning of the study the researcher analysed the classroom discourse using quantitative means to understand the patterns and highlight areas of consideration. However, teachers' inputs played an important role in arriving at the modified framework and eventual intervention. Thus, qualitative tools like interviews, simulative recalls and observations were used to record the reasoning and thinking process of the participants. This was later triangulated with data obtained from other tools. In this section the research tools used for this study has been discussed.

#### **3.11.1 Questionnaire**

A detailed questionnaire was given to the teachers. The questionnaire was followed by informal interactions with the teacher. Their response to the questionnaire and the interactions allowed the researcher to identify the eight teachers for the study.

The questionnaire (See Appendix 1) consisted of three parts: Part A aimed at getting general information, Part B tried to understand the teacher's views on her/his own classroom interaction and Part C tried to understand their professional development activities.

#### **3.11.2 Reflective interviews**

For this study unstructured and structured interviews were used to engage teachers in reflection on classroom discourse.

Unstructured interviews offered enough flexibility to explore various aspects of teaching. These took the form of conversations which were reflective in nature. The researcher asked open-ended questions about various aspects of classroom interaction. The teachers were encouraged to listen to parts of their recorded lessons and reflect on them. These interviews tried to understand their questioning strategies and other interactional features to link them to their desired pedagogic goals. Thus, using the proposed SETT framework reflective feedback sessions were conducted which were open-ended in nature but not disorganised.

These interviews involved detailed note taking and few were audio taped. Some of the teachers felt uncomfortable with audio recording their interviews because many a times these interviews involved justifications and sometimes confessions made on the part of the teacher. Although these interviews were relatively unstructured, specific parts of classroom data were used to reflect on critical events that transpired in the classrooms.

These unstructured interviews allowed teachers to freely discuss other related issues pertaining to teaching materials, curriculum, administration and assessment. This was not seen in a negative light. Instead these observations made by the teachers were seen in line with various stages of reflection.

#### Structured interviews

During the research it was felt that a few structured interviews were needed to focus on specific aspects of teacher talk. These interviews used three sets of questions:

Domain specific questions which probed teacher's thoughts pertaining to classroom interaction

Generic questions were used to clarify the patterns that were observed in the data

Excerpts from the audio taped classroom data were used to maintain the focus of the interview.

Event recall interviews were used after class observation and during the reflective feedback sessions. These allowed teachers to recall specific events from classroom. These allowed the researcher to set further probe questions and guide the discussions.

### **3.11.3 Classroom observations**

Classroom observations took place in two phases. Classrooms of each teacher were observed twice a week for four weeks to collect initial data. These lessons were audio taped and were carefully analysed by the researcher. The researcher used the classroom observation checklist while observing the classes (See Appendix 5). The teachers were asked to provide their lesson plans before the class. However, most teachers failed to hand in their lesson plans on time. Therefore, Lesson-report form for structuring of lessons (Richards and Lockhart, 1996) was given to them so that they have a readily available structure to fill in their lesson's goals and content. (See Appendix 6)

Having identified the patterns of classroom interaction, detailed discussion with the teachers was carried out. After conducting workshops and reflective feedback sessions based on the first month recording, second phase of classroom observation was initiated. Classroom observations in this phase were carried out once a week for each of the teachers and again audio taped. Videotaping was not possible because the teachers unanimously preferred not to be videotaped. These audio tapes were

transcribed and used in the reflective feedback sessions where the teachers were encouraged to use the modified framework and engage in reflection.

The teachers were encouraged to audio tape at least two of their lessons on their own to encourage them to take initiative and engage in critical reflection on their own. Thus, towards the end of the study teachers were encouraged to take part in collaborative sessions with their own audio tapes and no classroom observation inputs were given by the researcher.

#### **3.11.4 Stimulated Recalls**

This technique was useful in conducting the reflective feedback sessions using the modified SETT framework. The teachers looked at portions of their classroom talk and also listened to parts of the lesson and engaged in reflection using the modified framework. Going back to their lessons allowed them to be more aware of their classroom interactional strategies and their use of language. The audio tapes supported by transcripts helped them to recall specific events and strengthen the links between their language use and pedagogic goals.

#### **3.11.5 Journal entries**

The teachers were encouraged to maintain journal entries only after workshops were conducted and a few reflective feedback interviews were held. It was a challenging task to motivate them to write. However, Reflection questions to guide journal entries were used (Richards and Lockhart, 1996) to prompt the teachers (See Appendix 4). They were also given a form to record questions to shape their reflective conversations in the collaborative sessions (Zwozdiak-Myers,2012). Most of the teachers wrote brief notes and points which helped them to interact during the

reflective feedback sessions. However, all of them failed to maintain well-organised journals. Their lesson plans were also used to understand their pedagogic goals. However, teachers found it difficult to maintain detailed lesson plans. Hence, they were given Lesson-report form for structuring of lessons (Richards and Lockhart, 1996) to reduce their effort in maintaining lesson plans (See Appendix 6)

### **3.11.6 Field notes**

Being a research project which heavily used qualitative tools, researcher's field notes were of great significance. Detailed notes were taken by the researcher during field trips which further facilitated triangulation. The field notes allowed the researcher to make the links and arrive at the overall picture. The classroom observations, workshops and the reflective feedback sessions all took place keeping in mind the availability and convenience of the participants. Therefore, the data collected from various sources had to be linked and connections had to be established. All this was facilitated by the field notes.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter the research methodology for this study has been discussed. The rationale for this study, the assumptions and the research questions has been presented. The context of the study has also been described. The nature and aims of this study need to be in line with the philosophical underpinnings of the study. Hence, the epistemological and ontological stances adopted for this study have been discussed in great detail. The qualitative and quantitative methods have been presented and the need to use a mixed method for this study has also been discussed. The case study method has been explained and how it's use in the study has been justified. The reflective conversation framework which supports narrative discourse

has been discussed in great detail. Discussion on issues related to validity and generalisability of results also find its place in this chapter. Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in educational research. Therefore, a section has been devoted to discuss various ethical concerns like transparency, being unobtrusive, teacher-researcher association, confidentiality and participatory ethics. The overall design of this study has been presented followed by the profile of the sample. The chapter also outlines the research tools used in this research project and the last section describes the method of data analysis for this study.