PREFACE

Research is a high-hat word that scares a lot of people. It needn't. It is rather simple. Essentially, research is nothing but a state of mind—a friendly, welcoming attitude toward change... going out to look for change instead of waiting for it to come. Research, for practical men, is an effort to do things better and not be caught asleep at the switch... It is the problem-solving mind as contrasted with the let-well-enough-alone mind... It is the "tomorrow" mind instead of the "yesterday" mind.
—Charles F. Kettering

I was initiated into ELT by Mr N. S. Prabhu and others when I attended the Summer Institute in English jointly organized by the British Council, the CIEFL, Hyderabad, and Calicut University in 1977. Since then I have been sustaining my interest in this field through my participation in several workshops and refresher courses. When I attended the U.G.C. Refresher Course in English at the CIEFL, Hyderabad in February 1991, I was prodded into a heightened awareness by the luminaries of ELT there. Mr E. Nageswara Rao's words in his hand-out ("Research Methodology in ELT") still ring in my ears: "Research in ELT is more relevant and urgent for Indian teachers of English than research on literary topics because it deals with their classroom problems."

Nearly two decades of my experience as a teacher of English as a compulsory second language at the tertiary level facilitated my dealing with dozens of prescribed texts fulfilling the needs of the syllabus, say, detailed prose and poetry, non-detailed texts, composition and a little grammar. In the classroom, teachers are the actual practitioners and face the students amidst a lot of constraints—social, political, administrative, psychological and moral. But I have consistently found that during some hours, the students' involvement in the learning process is up to my expectation whereas during some others, the same students look unconcerned about it though the campus atmosphere is comparatively smooth and conducive. Many variables may be ascribed to the