Challenges in conducting evaluation and research: experiences of English in Action in Bangladesh

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:

For guidance on citations see FAQs.

© 2014 The Authors

Version: Version of Record

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online’s data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk
Challenges in Conducting Evaluation and Research: Experiences of English in Action in Action in Bangladesh

Sonia Burton: sonia.burton@open.ac.uk
Farhan Azim: farhan.azim@eiabd.com
Overview

- English in Action
- EIA evaluation and research
- Challenges & way forward
- Concluding remarks
Supporting English language teaching and learning

2008 => 2017

Implementer: [Logo]

Funder: [UK Aid Logo]

Partners:
- Mott MacDonald
- BBC Media Action
- UCTEP
- FIVDB
- The Open University
- BMB Mott MacDonald
Scale

PILOT
750 teachers

UPSCALE 1
4000 teachers

UPSCALE 2
8000 teachers

I&S
64,000 teachers

76,000 teachers
10.5 million students
Across Bangladesh: 112 upazilas so far

2012: 35
2013/14: 70

2015 onwards...
## Teacher professional development & classroom materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio visual</th>
<th>Print based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening activities</td>
<td>Activity Guide, Posters, Flashcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video with narrator</td>
<td>Teacher Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language for teachers</td>
<td>EL4T workbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

- **Listening activities**: Activity Guide, Posters, Flashcards
- **Video with narrator**: Teacher Guide
- **English language for teachers audio**: EL4T workbook
- **Speaker**:
Large-scale quantitative English language competence

Classroom practice

Perceptions
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Teachers' lives
- Student lives
- Small-scale qualitative
- New elements

Pilot teachers
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Economic premium study
- Employer survey
- Logframe/need-based studies
- Community study
- UCEP study
Challenges & ways forward
Challenge 1: Little background information & literature directly relevant to the project

- Need of information to design the programme

Way forward:

⇒ Review existing literature

⇒ Baseline studies – ascertain state of:

- Spoken EL competence - Teachers & students
- Technology infrastructure
- Motivations of students & teachers
- English lessons
- English teaching materials
- EL teacher training provision
Challenge 1: Little background information & literature directly relevant to the project

Baseline studies provided:

⇒ Evidence-based platform to design programme
⇒ Benchmark against which to evaluate progress of EIA teachers & students
⇒ Example: EL competence

2010 baseline

2011 Pilot teachers (after 12 months)

2013 Cohort 2 teachers (after 12 months)
Challenge 2: ‘Reactive effect’

Classroom observation

- ‘Reactive’ effect (Webb, 1966; Bryman 2008)
- Do teachers behave as they normally do when being observed?
  - Obtrusive nature of the researcher?
  - Impact of presumed hierarchy?
  - Validity of data collected? Authentic teacher practice?

⇒ classroom practice
⇒ community study
⇒ teachers lives
⇒ students lives
Challenge 2: ‘Reactive effect’

Way forward:
• Training & documentation:
  - Ask researchers not to judge - objective
  - Explain study to T & HT fully, & not there to judge
  - Reassure T confidential use of data
  - Researcher introduces self to class
  - Be as unobtrusive as possible (sit at back, be quiet, try not to disturb)
• Triangulation – compare findings with those of other studies to validate findings
• Report the findings with relative caution
Challenge 3: Translation & interpretation

- Research studies for a large-scale programme with a number of partners
- Different personnel involved => multiple levels of interpretation

Community study:

1. Designing study & instrument
2. Interviews
3. Fieldnotes & voice recorded
4. Transcription & translation by researchers
5. Analysis of data
6. Interpretation & write-up
Challenge 3: Translation & interpretation

Way forward:

• International team designing instruments – English => Bangla; internal/external checking process.
• Piloting instruments - check understanding by teachers & students
• Checking of analysis by bi-lingual, experienced researcher
Challenge 4: Issues while collecting data

- Political unrest – strikes
- Nationwide primary teacher strike
  \[\Rightarrow\] Limited travelling opportunities; security of researchers in the field; disruption of fieldwork plans
- Teacher transfer/involvement in other activities (e.g. surveys)
  \[\Rightarrow\] Can’t gather data from intended teachers/students
Challenge 4: Issues while collecting data

Way forward:
• Selecting extra respondents/cases – alternative respondents/cases to collect data from
• Scheduling travel around political unrest
• Allocating extra time for fieldwork/flexibility in plans and schedules
• Researchers in the field asked to take extra caution and sometimes to postpone work.
Concluding remarks

- Be informed! – obstacles & context
- Think through and prepare for all potential eventualities... (Murphy’s law)
- Thorough training & briefing for field researchers
- Attention to detail/being thorough at all stages of the research
  - Planning, implementation, analysis, write-up
References
