Challenges in Conducting Evaluation and Research:
Experiences of English in Action in Bangladesh

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Overview

- English in Action
- EIA evaluation and research
- Challenges & way forward
- Concluding remarks
Supporting English language teaching and learning
2008 => 2017

Implementer:

Funder:
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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening activities</td>
<td>Activity Guide, Posters, Flashcards</td>
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<td>Video with narrator</td>
<td>Teacher Guide</td>
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<td>English language for teachers</td>
<td>EL4T workbook</td>
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<td>audio</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
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EVALUATION
AND RESEARCH

Large-scale quantitative English language competence

Classroom practice

Perceptions
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Teachers lives
- Student Lives
- Small-scale qualitative
- New elements
- Pilot teachers
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:
  - Technology infrastructure
  - Spoken English competence - Teachers & students
  - Motivations of students & teachers
  - English lessons
  - EL teacher training provision
  - English teaching materials
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
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 strike

⇒ Limited travelling opportunities; security of researchers in the field; disruption of fieldwork plans

- Teacher transfer/involvement in other activities (e.g. surveys)

⇒ 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

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