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

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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: [Logo]

Funder: [Logo]
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 audio</td>
<td>EL4T workbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Image: Various educational materials and a classroom setting.*
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Large-scale quantitative English language competence

Classroom practice

Perceptions
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Small-scale qualitative
- Teacher lives
- Student Lives
- New elements
- Pilot teachers
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Logframe/needs-based studies
- Economic premium study
- UCEP study
- Employer survey
- Community 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:

- Technology infrastructure
- Spoken EL competence - Teachers & students
- Motivations of students & teachers
- EL teacher training provision
- English teaching materials
- English lessons
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
  ⇒ 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
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
