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
**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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening activities</td>
<td>Activity Guide, Posters, Flashcards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video with narrator</td>
<td>Teacher Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>English language for teachers</td>
<td>EL4T workbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>audio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Large-scale quantitative English language competence

Classroom practice

Perceptions
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Small-scale qualitative

Teachers lives

Student Lives

Pilot teachers

New elements
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

- Logframe/needs-based studies
  - Economic premium study
  - UCEP study
  - Employer survey
  - Community study
Challenges & ways forward

PC: kimbeach.com
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
- 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
  ⇒ 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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