# Chapter 9: Raising standards of English: questions of proficiency

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### Introduction

English in Action began in a challenging context. Students' and teachers' levels of proficiency were extremely low (EIA 2009a) and prevailing traditional pedagogies ineffective and uninspiring. Teachers' understanding of their craft seems to have been based on a combination of a view of language as 'a system of structurally related elements for coding meaning' (Richards and Rodgers 2014: 23) and a behaviourist conception of learning based on copying and repetition. An emphasis on linguistic form is maintained through culture and practice and reinforced by national examinations. Such a view of English recalls the 'autonomous' conception of literacy (Street 2003) and the idea of autonomous subject knowledge (Ellis 2007), each existing free of social or cultural considerations, with learning a cognitive exercise of mastering component parts. Relatively little English proficiency is required of the teacher, just the words and phrases of the text book, to be presented and explained in Bangla. The overwhelming majority of the classroom talk observed in the EIA baseline study was in Bangla (EIA 2009c).

In the international context, this unpromising situation is far from exceptional. Reviewing studies around the world (Nunan 2003; Wedell 2008, 2011), Wedell concludes that 'there are relatively few state school classrooms anywhere in which most learners are developing a useable knowledge of English' (Wedell 2011: 3). Reasons identified include teachers' inadequate English proficiency, ineffective pedagogy, the examination system and a mismatch between initiatives' goals and classroom realities (Nunan 2003). The last of these is often attributable to a 'native speakerist' (Holliday 2013) perspective, which roots language pedagogies in western culture, and sees native English speakers as the ideal teachers and conflicting aspects of local culture as something to be 'corrected' (Holliday 2013). Factors obstructing effective innovation include policymakers' failure to

support teachers and recognize the demands being placed on them, the ways in which teachers and teacher educators are trained, a failure to engage influential members of the wider ELT 'culture' (including examination designers), and inflexible modes of implementation (Wedell 2008).

English in Action's challenge was to overcome shortcomings in teachers' subject knowledge (proficiency) and pedagogy, whilst avoiding alienating teachers and promoting harmony between the Programme's aspirations and the demands of the national system. Most of these matters are addressed in detail in other chapters and the focus of this chapter is on teachers' English language proficiency, the very low level of which (EIA, 2009a) was considered one of the major challenges to the goal of raising students' attainment levels.

The common-sense assumption that English teachers require a high level of English proficiency is rarely challenged (Chambless 2012) and target-language competence underlies language education policies around the world (e.g. Qi 2009; Nunan 2003; Butler 2004). The target language competence of English teachers is reported to be inadequate in many countries (Sešek 2007) and calls for it to be improved are frequent (Butler 2004). Moreover, teachers themselves often judge their competence to be inadequate (Barnes 2006).

However, whilst the improvement of teachers' proficiency is an important driver in many teacher development programmes (TPD) (Butler 2004), there is some acceptance of the idea that a lower degree of proficiency may sometimes be sufficient. For Modern Foreign Language (MFL) teaching in English primary schools, for example, it has been argued that a class's own teacher may be more effective than an outside specialist even though her/his command of the target language may be rudimentary (Cable et al. 2010). In Italy, Level B1 of the Common European Framework (CEFR) (Verhelst et al. 2009) has been deemed a minimum level for primary teachers (Bondi and Poppi 2007). The view that 'very good language teachers may not necessarily have the top levels of language competence according to the CEF' (Kelly and Grenfell 2004: 49) challenges the position that improving teachers' proficiency will necessarily improve their effectiveness.

The issue of teachers' proficiency becomes especially salient in the context of a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, since the target language must be used with flexibility and facility to conduct each lesson (Banegas 2009). However, the proficiency even of university language graduates may be inadequate, thanks to a focus on general and academic language, rather than the language of the classroom or even of communication (Elder 2001).

Meeting the needs of English teachers in their training has been seen as an example of English for specific purposes (ESP) (Sešek 2007; Elder 2001). Using English, teachers need, for example, to be able to manage classes, introduce lesson topics, give explanations, make presentations, initiate and moderate discussions and carry out assessments (Sešek 2007). All these activities require the use of particular forms of language.

Elder (2001: 153) identifies six language functions over which English teachers must have command:

- Present information and explain subject-specific metalinguistic concepts

- Extract meaning from multi-way discussion (with two or more speakers)

- Discuss a problem/express opinion

- Summarize/paraphrase simplify/disambiguate information

- Formulate questions

- Issue directives, set up a classroom activity

If (as is assumed by CLT approaches), interaction underpins language learning, then teachers must be able to use English to 'shape learner contributions and mak[e] strategic decisions in the moment by moment unfolding of a lesson' (Walsh 2006: 133).

Moreover, the English demands on teachers will vary according to context (e.g. students' age, purpose for learning English, level of study) (Sešek 2007).

The above discussion can be seen in terms of teachers' professional knowledge. The idealised form of English (usually gained in earlier study), and the particular subset of it which is codified as 'curriculum knowledge', are held by teachers as 'subject content knowledge'. The version

of English used for teaching is part of 'pedagogical content knowledge' (Shulman 1986, 1987) and may result from teachers' application of their previously learnt proficiency to classroom purposes (Loewenberg Ball et al. 2008). Alternatively, the integration of English proficiency and pedagogy in teacher training has been advocated (Sešek 2007; Banegas 2009), though practical initiatives such as ELTeach (Young et al. 2014) and the University of Joensuu's 'Classroom Language' course are 'still a rarity' (Sešek 2007: 412).

It makes sense to consider classroom language, rather than classroom English, since teachers must strike a balance between their use of students' first language and the target language. This element of pragmatic competence has been called 'code-switching' (Sešek 2007) and, in more recent literature, 'translanguaging' (e.g. García and Wei 2014). The question of the appropriate use of Bangla and English was an important consideration in the development of EIA's materials and played a significant part in the way the Programme played out in practice (see Chapters 6 and 8).

So far, the question of the kind of English that teachers seek to teach has been left unexamined. With English increasingly seen as an international language (EIL) and a lingua franca (ELF) (Young and Walsh 2010), the wisdom of referencing to any one national standard (be it British, USA or whatever) is questionable, as is the very notion of invariable models of a language. There is certainly a Bangladeshi variety of English, instanced by a thriving English language press and heard when an international language is required. If Bangladeshi students progress to using English in the workplace (one of the outcomes envisaged by the Programme), this will be the variety they encounter.

The traditional pedagogies identified in the baseline study (EIA 2009c) take an autonomous view of English and focus mainly on the English of the text books (curriculum English), taking no account of the kind of English specifically tailored to teaching. Communicative approaches prioritise the use of the target language, but many of EIA's teachers had a low level of proficiency. The remainder of this chapter will explore the ways in which the Programme developed teachers' proficiency alongside their pedagogy and considers the impact on student outcomes.

## Gains in teachers' proficiency

### Pedagogy and proficiency

This chapter is concerned with the place of 'proficiency' in a programme that set out to raise

students' proficiency primarily through improving teachers' pedagogy. In the light of this, the effects

of the EIA Programme on teachers' proficiency were in some ways surprising.

English language proficiency assessments (EIA 2012a) were conducted with teachers at the

beginning and end of the pilot presentation (2010- 2011), and at the end of the first presentation of

Phase 3 (EIA 2014a). Data from the start of the pilot (2010) were used as the baseline. Assessments

were carried out by an external agency, Trinity College London, using their Graded Examinations in

Spoken English (GESE) syllabus (Trinity College London 2009). Full details of sampling and data

analysis can be found in the respective research reports (EIA 2012a, 2014a), while the assessment

methodology is set out by Trinity (Trinity College London 2009). The GESE scale maps to the

Common European Framework of Reference (Verhelst et al. 2009), but is finer grained, with usually

two GESE levels corresponding to one CEFR level (e.g. GESE Levels 2 and 3 correspond to CEFR Level

A1).

### English language proficiency: primary teachers

In both 2011 and 2013 the English language of the Programme's primary teachers showed

statistically significant improvement. Figure 9.1 shows the comparison of these two cohorts with the

baseline (EIA 2014a: 23).

[Figure 9.1 here]

In contrast to the baseline, no primary teacher failed the assessment in 2011 or 2013 with

the great majority (97 per cent in 2011, 92.7 per cent in 2013) achieving Grade 2 or above. This level

corresponds to the proficiency required by the Class 3 text book.[1] In both years, more teachers

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[1] To aid the interpretation of the Phase 2 proficiency results, an analysis of the *English for Today* text books, showing the GESE level expected to be attained by the end of each school year was undertaken by a senior Trinity College assessor.

achieved Grade 4 and above (44.9 per cent in 2011, 35.7 per cent in 2013), representing improvements over the baseline of 7.9 per cent and 9.2 per cent respectively. While improvements in both years were statistically significant, those in 2013, with a much larger cohort, were not quite as high as those achieved in 2011.

English language proficiency: secondary teachers

The picture for secondary teachers is more complex (Figure 9.2; EIA 2014a: 27). Statistically significant improvements were registered in 2011. However, the results for 2013 showed no statistically significant difference between either the 2010 baseline ($p$=0.475) or the improved results of 2011 ($p$=0.238).

[Figure 9.2 here]

In 2011 there was a statistically significant improvement ($p$<0.05) across all the pass grades up to Grade 6, but this was not repeated in 2013, where the greatest improvement was in the numbers attaining at Grades 3 and 4 and in all grades above Grade 2.

Although the 2013 secondary teacher results were in part disappointing,[2] more attained at or above the grade (Grade 3) that maps to the language demands of the first secondary text book (Class 6), and at Grade 4, which gives access to a significant proportion of the Class 7 text book. As will also be seen, the performance of the students who were taught by these teachers did show statistically significant improvement.

Gains in students' proficiency

The focus of this chapter has so far been on the development of teachers' English language proficiency. The question of the impact on students' learning is more difficult to answer as it is impossible, from these studies, to separate the effects of improved pedagogy from those of improved proficiency. What is clear, however, is that EIA students' proficiency did improve.

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[2] The Research report (EIA 2014a) considers possible reasons, including the fact that by this stage the Programme was concentrating its efforts on relatively disadvantaged upazillas, where a baseline study may have shown lower attainment, and the small size of the secondary teacher sample.

### English language proficiency: primary students

In each year in which their proficiency was assessed, primary students showed statistically significant improvement ($p<0.01$ in each year) over the 2010 baseline (Figure 9.3).

[Figure 9.3 here]

The proportion of students passing the assessment rose from 35 per cent at the baseline to 50 per cent in 2010 and 70 per cent in 2013 and 2014. After 2010, most students attained at Grade 1, with a steady increase in the number attaining Grade 2 falling back to 6.9 per cent in 2014, a figure still above the baseline level.

### English language proficiency: secondary students

As with primary students, secondary students showed statistically significant improvements (2011 $p<0.001$; 2013 & 2014: $p<0.01$) over the 2010 baseline in each successive cohort (Figure 9.4).

[Figure 9.4 here]

As with primary students, progress centered on the number of students achieving any kind of a pass grade, a proportion ranging from 90 per cent in 2011 to 83 per cent in 2014. In both 2011 and 2013 the proportion attaining within the Grade range 2-7 was greater than in the baseline study, but this was not the case in 2014.

For both phases then, the major achievement was in terms of a substantial improvement in the number of students passing the assessment, while appreciable improvements at higher levels occurred in some years but not others.

## The place of English in English in Action

Over the life of the Programme, EIA's prime focus has been on students' proficiency and overall the impact has been positive. There have also been improvements in teachers' proficiency and, while these might be linked to specific initiatives such as English Language for Teachers (EL4T) or the 'Classroom Language' resources (See Chapter 6), one of the tenets of EIA is that language always has a context. This section examines the context in which EIA teachers experienced English. First of all, consider what happens at a cluster meeting (see Box 9.1).

Box 9.1.  Inside the cluster meeting

Vignette 1: Cluster meeting 1

Azad and Mina, two Teacher Facilitators (TFs) have started the first day of a cluster meeting. It is 9:15 a.m. and about 25 teachers are present. Mina conducts the first session in English, using an ice-breaker activity from the Facilitators' Guide. The participants take part in English. They do not need to be excellent English speakers to participate and they enjoy the short interaction with their colleagues. Some look shy but they still manage to play a full part.

Next, Azad supports teachers to study Unit 1 from the Teachers' Guide and shows the link between the Guide and the audio-visual materials. Together they watch a video of a classroom activity. The presenter explains in Bangla the techniques shown, then summarizes them in English. Next, Azad asks the teachers, in small groups, to discuss (in English) the techniques, using questions given in the Teachers' Guide. The four or five teachers who usually teach English in Class 4 and 5 seem quite confident in speaking English. Azad had to explain the questions to the whole group in Bangla because most of the teachers are hesitant to use English during the group work. In the plenary, the confident English users are chosen by the group members to present their group work. Their answers are quite vague and abstract, so the TFs elicit more detail by asking questions. At one point, a member of the central EIA team, who is observing, encourages teachers to use both English and Bangla during their discussion. A few teachers who are quite proficient in English are still in favour of using only English, but many have become spontaneous and active once they know they can use Bangla.

In the next activity teachers develop a lesson plan; they interact mostly in Bangla. This is a very practical session where they are consulting the text book and Teachers' Guide to see how they can apply new techniques seen in the videos in their own classroom and go on to plan a lesson they will lead in English. Teachers demonstrate the activities in small groups and provide constructive feedback to each other, mostly using English, like the teacher in the video.

Next Mina plays an EL4T audio activity and teachers work in pairs following the instructions given by the audio. Teachers practice simple language that can help them use effective English in the classroom. They can see that the theme and vocabulary of the activities are similar to the content of the text book they use in their classrooms.

During the final session of the day, Azad summarises all the activities in English and participants share their action plans and learnings of the day in English and Bangla.

Vignette 2: Final cluster meeting

In the first session of the meeting, Mina identifies that some participants could not understand the theme of the previous unit and about five teachers could not follow their lesson plans properly. Another ten are ready to share reflections on their lessons. Both TFs try to create an environment for open discussion where teachers can share their positive or negative experiences. One teacher shares that now she feels more confident to speak in English in the classroom because she knows the frequently-used classroom phrases. Her students also understand them because she uses them regularly. Last month a Government high official praised her practice after observing her English class.

In this meeting, the teachers study the last few units of the Teachers' Guide. In discussions after watching the videos the extent of English use is considerable. The participants seem more confident compared to the first meeting. Their use of English is not always accurate but they are more fluent. Now they are quite comfortable in switching languages from Bangla to English. When they feel they are unable to express their opinions, they often switch back to Bangla.

Another teacher shares a recent initiative, establishing a weekly English language club for teachers, using the EL4T materials. The teachers say they want to continue with EIA-style activities after this final meeting, so Mina asks participants to identify ways they can do so. Teachers come up with several promising ideas and plan to meet up informally.

[END OF BOX 9.1]

The vignettes in Box 9.1 show that teachers experienced cluster meetings as a language-rich environment. Teachers do a lot of listening, but also a lot of talking, engaging with each other and the session's facilitators. Much, but not all, of the language used is English (there is some code-switching) and there are examples of curriculum English, classroom English (both explicitly taught and arising from planning and presenting lessons) and English used in context for the teachers' own purposes. The TFs encourage and scaffold the use of English ensuring all teachers take part and that everything is understood. Understanding is essential if the meeting is to achieve its purpose of developing teacher's understanding of pedagogy.

In fact, much in the cluster meeting embodies the principles of CLT set out in the book's *Introduction*. There is a communicative purpose to all the language used and a great deal of interaction, in which all teachers are supported to participate. Although the TFs have key themes that they emphasise in each session, the group sessions are highly participant-centred. Teachers use speaking, listening, reading and writing in a naturally integrated way, as they work together on lesson plans, for example. Correction of teachers' English was not part of the TFs' role, and certainly not correction to any Standard form. The language of cluster meetings is English as spoken in Bangladesh and, it is inevitably concentrated on language to use in or talk about classroom teaching.

Bangla is used judiciously to both support understanding and maintain participation, thereby helping develop teachers' English; the technique of explaining a video sequence in Bangla then summarising in English has resonances with the ways in which the two languages are used together in the EIA materials.

Similarly, the EIA materials expose teachers to a great deal of English. Video materials for both phases show local teachers using English to teach and manage their classrooms in English (see Chapter 6). The classroom audio materials are mostly in English, but include some use of Bangla, especially in material for younger primary classes to scaffold understanding. The print, audio and video materials include many opportunities to read and hear English, with printed documents for

secondary teachers drafted in a clear and accessible variety of Standard English. Because the English

of many primary teachers was relatively weak (EIA 2009a), all primary print materials were in Bangla.

English, whose English?

A local variety of spoken English is used in all digital materials, not only to support comprehension,

but also to ensure audio examples harmonise with the English used by the teacher. Primary teachers

hear several minutes of recorded English in each EIA-based lesson they teach and secondary audios

are exclusively in English. During Phase 2, all secondary teachers followed a Masters' level TPD

course, with sessions led in English by local tutors. The majority of participants opted to complete

their assignments in English.

Perhaps the most important English learning opportunity is teachers' own use of English as

they teach. Numerous formal and informal observations provide evidence of teachers making

effective use of English to teach and manage classes. Most teachers could draw on linguistic

resources developed previously, and all had the opportunity to apply the classroom language

offered in print and audio form in a contextualised and purposeful way.

Systematic studies of teachers' use of English in the classroom in each phase (EIA 2010a,

2011b, 2015b) showed lessons where the majority of teacher and student talk was in English (Table

9.1). A qualitative study in Phase 2 (EIA 2011a) provided evidence of the interactive and purposeful

nature of classroom talk, with students no longer spending most of their time echoing and copying

as they did in the baseline classrooms (EIA 2009c).

**Table 9.1. Evidence of interaction and use of English in primary and secondary English lessons**

|  | Teacher talk % of lesson | | Student talk % of lesson | | % of student talk in English | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary |
| Phase 2 (pilot) cohort 1 | 34 | 33 | 27 | 23 | 88 | 88 |
| Phase 3 cohort 2 | 45 | 48 | 27 | 24 | 91 | 92 |
| Phase 3 cohort 3 | 47 | 53 | 27 | 24 | 94 | 92 |

Sources: EIA 2010a, 2011b, 2015b

EIA teachers reported that they enjoy teaching English and are confident in their level of proficiency

(EIA 2011c).

## Learning English in action

English in Action's research suggests that progress to students' improved attainment has followed the Programme's theory of change (see Chapter 13): TPD activities have led to changed classroom practices, which in turn have led to students' improved proficiency. There is fluctuation in student outcomes over the life of the Programme, but overall, that 'results chain' holds, particularly at the lower end of competency. The picture for improvement of teacher proficiency, while generally positive is less consistent.

Teachers' proficiency is a key component of their improved pedagogy, and in their effective use of classroom language, proficiency and pedagogy are combined. Many observers, over the life of the Programme, have commented that teachers' use of English for teaching appears to be at a higher level than the Trinity assessment results suggest, and this raises questions about the suitability of applying a general assessment of English to the language of teachers. An alternative approach, considering 'English for teaching' to be an example of English for specific purposes (ESP), has been advocated (Elder 2001; Sešek 2007; Bondi and Poppi 2007).

EIA teachers experienced English in two ways. On the one hand, they had plenty of exposure to objectified, autonomous models of language – what Ellis (2007) calls 'knowledge-as thing' – for example in the language of the text books, in the English of their earlier studies, and in some elements of the EIA materials. This kind of knowledge has obvious parallels with teachers' (unenacted) knowledge *about* pedagogy, discussed in Chapter 8.

On the other hand, a good deal of EIA teachers' experience of English involves using the language for dynamic engagement: with peers, EIA facilitators, students, EIA materials and the curriculum. In classroom use, teachers' proficiency is entwined with practice and is thus both subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Rather than simply being an inert, invariant object, subject knowledge can be seen as 'emergent within complex and dynamic social systems' (Ellis 2007: 455). Ellis further contends that subject knowledge is not fixed, but a form of collective knowledge held in common by teachers and therefore can be changed. Realistically, the subject

knowledge of non-native language teachers is changing all the time, as they develop personal models of the target language. Such an understanding supports EIA's adoption and acceptance of locally developing varieties of English in both materials and teacher development.

In the EIA classroom there is a place for examples of an autonomous (idealised and decontextualized) understanding of English, for example the *English for Today* text books, and even EIA's lists of classroom language. However, EIA's approaches to teacher development and pedagogy provide many opportunities to transform this knowledge through contextualised and purposeful interactions. It seems quite likely, for example, that the improvement in many teachers' proficiency involved bringing into active use linguistic knowledge originally rote-learnt for examinations.

Acceptance of the value of previously held understandings is in keeping with both a dynamic, contextualised view of teaching and learning and with the steps EIA took (outlined in Chapters 6 and 8) to recognise and build from context. The perceptions studies (EIA 2011c; 2014c) show how teachers have retained beliefs and techniques associated with traditional pedagogies, while fully subscribing to the principles of the communicative pedagogies promoted by the Programme. This includes the use of Bangla where appropriate to ensure students' full understanding (something EIA encourages but previous CLT programmes may have discouraged) and favouring continuing preference for explicit grammar teaching (EIA 2014c).[3] Teachers are not asked to abandon old ways, but to enact their existing professional knowledge in new ways.

All this entails an approach to teacher development which requires more than a simple handover of 'all the necessary new knowledge' in a single training event. EIA's initial workshops are not an introductory lecture but the beginning of a conversation. And since that conversation is largely in English, the English of the participants is improved.

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[3] Though this may be mainly a response to examination requirements.

## Lessons learnt

Whilst initially emphasising English language pedagogy, EIA's approach has revealed the important role of proficiency in English teacher development. Along the way, a number of valuable lessons were learnt.

The Programme's teacher development materials assume the importance of both proficiency and pedagogy, initially catering for the two elements separately. However, in practice the close relationship between them has become very clear as has the fact that teachers have developed their competence in the two in tandem. Similar initiatives in the future would be wise to embrace the dynamic and complex nature of teacher development, for example by building on the concept of 'English for teaching' and fostering proficiency and pedagogy together. This would entail a strong focus on classroom English to accompany the development of both pedagogic knowledge and pedagogic subject knowledge.

The materials, largely in response to the baseline finding that little English was to be heard in English lessons, emphasised the need to use English as the classroom language. In practice, even though English now predominates in EIA classrooms, English and Bangla were used together in both schools and training events. Similarly, the strategy of mixing Bangla and English in the Primary materials (digital and print) appears to have succeeded in ensuring understanding. It may be that the Programme could have been more forthright about the value of such an approach from its earliest days.

Some lessons have been learnt in connection with the proficiency assessments themselves. First, no suitable alternative could be found to expensive face-to-face assessments of communicative English. Costs were kept to a minimum by careful calculation of sample sizes and by using the same (2010) baseline throughout the pilot and upscaling phases. It was reasonable and realistic to assume that classroom practice and outcomes would not change significantly in schools outside the Programme, but there were demographic changes to the Programme's schools (notably an

increasing emphasis on working in the poorest areas) which may have skewed results. Establishing a baseline for each cohort would have yielded more reliable results.[4]

Secondly, as already noted, many researchers looking at EIA classrooms perceived a gap between a teacher's assessed grade and their use of language in the classroom. It may well be that a general test of communicative English does not do justice to teachers' specialist professional language and therefore it would have be advisable for the Programme to adopt, or develop for itself, an ESP assessment based on 'English for teaching'. Chapter 11, however, argues that the need for adequate time and resources constituted a significant barrier to the development of such an instrument.

Teachers' perceived inadequate proficiency has been widely identified as a significant barrier to national success in English language teaching. The problem is often presented as a cycle of failure, with low numbers of linguistically competent school leavers becoming over time, lower numbers of competent language teachers producing even fewer competent school leavers in turn. English in Action has shown that it is possible to break this cycle, working from the existing capacities of local teachers. Thus, an important lesson is that teachers with relatively low proficiency can improve the performance of their students and in the process improve their own proficiency.

EIA was able to demonstrate significant progress from a starting point where almost two-thirds of primary students and a quarter of secondary students could not demonstrate any knowledge of English at all. It should, however, be recognised that despite some spectacular improvements in the primary phase, the resultant levels are not always high, a case in point being the final Phase 3 cohort results for secondary students. EIA's major achievement has been to raise the attainment of a very large number of students, especially improving outcomes for those who previously would have demonstrated little or no proficiency. The success of language education lies

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[4] The QE study (see Chapter 11) showed that, though the EIA school results were parallel to those in past cohort studies, the control group performed better than was assumed from initial baseline (EIA 2017). The result was that there were few statistically significant experimental differences between control and intervention (EIA) groups.

not only in raw attainment, but in the development of successful language learners. School leavers who are willing and able to develop their proficiency further will do so when required to use their English in vocational and other contexts. Improvements in attainment, although sometimes modest, together with the enthusiasm for English evidenced throughout the Programme can, it is to be hoped, go a long way towards breaking the previously dominant negative cycle.