

<b>Institution:</b> The Open University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C23 Education		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Transforming English Language Teaching across Bangladesh		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008-2013		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Tom Power	Senior Lecturer	2000-present
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<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013 - March 2018		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The school component of English In Action (EIA) was a large-scale project designed with the aim of improving English language teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools across Bangladesh. Using: i) material delivered by mobile technologies; ii) teacher development activities in the workplace and iii) peer support opportunities, EIA provided an innovative way of improving English language teaching at scale. The EIA programme achieved large-scale systemic engagement from teachers, head teachers and education officers across all eight divisions and 64 districts of Bangladesh. This has delivered an impact on: i) <b>practitioners</b> by changing the classroom practice of 53,271 teachers - away from presenting to students and towards encouraging more student-talk in English ii) <b>learning</b> by improving the English language competence of 7.4 million students and iii) <b>public policy</b> by influencing two Government bodies to incorporate EIA materials into their curriculum resources and engage EIA expertise in the design of content for new teacher development programmes - thus embedding the EIA materials and pedagogic approach within the Bangladesh educational system, to secure long-term, sustainable, systemic change and iv) public policy by influencing approaches to teacher development outside of Bangladesh.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>For many years, English language was the most failed subject in schools in Bangladesh. Poor quality English language teaching was identified as a root cause, with teachers not knowing how to put 'Communicative Language Teaching' into practice. Teachers themselves had limited English skills and students typically had very little opportunity to speak in English during English language lessons. Funded by DFID, over a 10-year period, the school component of EIA focused on demonstrably improving English language teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools across Bangladesh. Researchers from the OU worked with international partners BMB Mott McDonald and BBC Media Action, as well as local NGOs such as Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) and Friends in the Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) to develop an iterative EIA programme of research and development. Between 2008 and 2011 OU researchers developed and trialled their working hypothesis which posited that the most effective way of achieving large-scale teacher development in Communicative English Language Teaching in Bangladesh was to implement a programme that was:</p> <p><b>Technology-enabled:</b> bespoke audio resources alongside teacher development videos, that demonstrate and explore Communicative Language Teaching approaches in authentic classroom settings, are delivered using devices such as iPods/MP3 players or mobile phones.</p> <p><b>School-based:</b> teacher development activities are delivered in the workplace - where teachers enquire into their own classroom practice, explore new teaching-learning approaches, and develop practical insights into improving student learning.</p> <p><b>Networked:</b> Teachers' development progresses through peer-learning and shared journeys of discovery, as opposed to cascading 'knowledge' through teacher educators.</p>		

The initial EIA ‘intervention’ at the heart of the programme was therefore a school-based professional development model that blended Technology Enhanced Learning (where Communicative Language Teaching principles and examples were delivered through audio-visual material on an MP3 player) with face-to-face support, such as orientation workshops, cluster meetings with teachers on the same programme and visits from teacher facilitators. The appropriateness of this model was examined by conducting observations and interviews with 6 schools that were participating in a pre-pilot intervention in 2009 (randomly chosen from 15 pre-pilot schools). Data from classroom observations, regarding how teachers were using the technology, informed interviews with 12 teachers. Results indicated that the teachers responded well to both the pre-loaded material on the iPod and the peer support from cluster meetings and facilitator visits. Furthermore, changes in practice were being reported after just four months [O1]. Further studies enabled a more nuanced understanding of the influence of the intervention. For example, field-tests were undertaken with 40 teachers between March and April 2011 in order to ascertain whether teachers would prefer to use mobile phones (with SD cards that contained pre-loaded EIA material) rather than iPods. Analysis of data taken from surveys, interviews and focus groups indicated that teachers preferred using mobile phones and found it easy to use the SD cards. These results informed the Upscaling Phase of EIA and enabled the programme to implement a more sustainable way forward [O2, O3]. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 600 primary school children from schools, in different regions in Bangladesh, who were participating in the pilot intervention phase in 2010. These interviews were used to examine the children’s beliefs concerning English language Learning and their perceptions regarding English language Teaching in an EIA pilot intervention school. Results indicated that overall, the children responded well to, and had positive beliefs about, the value of the activities associated with a Communicative Language Teaching approach [O4]. Finally, an overarching evaluation of the pilot intervention phase, used case study examples to illuminate the conclusion that teacher facilitators needed more support and guidance on how to enact their role in order to improve the effectiveness of the school-based support model [O5].

### 3. References to the research

The research underpinning this impact case study has been funded by DFID and was awarded A+ following its final report to DFID. All the references are in peer-reviewed journals.

- O1. **Shohel, M.M.C.**, & Banks, F. (2012) School-based teachers’ professional development through technology-enhanced learning in Bangladesh. *Teacher Development: An international journal of teachers’ professional development*, 16(1), 25–42.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2012.668103>
- O2. **Shrestha, P.** (2012) Teacher professional development using mobile technologies in a large-scale project: Lessons learned from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(4): 34-49. Article no. 3.  
<https://doi.org/10.4018/ijcallt.2012100103>
- O3. **Walsh, C.S., Power, T., Khatoun, M., Biswas, S.K., Paul, A.K., Sarkar, B.C., & Griffiths, M.** (2013) The ‘trainer in your pocket’: Mobile phones within a teacher continuing professional development program in Bangladesh. *Professional Development in Education*, 39(2), 186–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2013.766232>
- O4. **Shrestha, P.N.** (2013) English language classroom practices: Bangladeshi primary school children’s perceptions. *RELC Journal*, 44(2), 147–162.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688213488466>
- O5. **Power, T., Shaheen, R., Solly, M., Woodward, C., & Burton, S.** (2012) English in action: school based teacher development in Bangladesh. *The Curriculum Journal*, 23(4), 503–529.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2012.737539>

### 4. Details of the impact

The EIA programme achieved large-scale systemic engagement from teachers, head Teachers and education officers across all eight divisions and 64 districts of Bangladesh [C1]. Between 1st August 2013 to March 2018 EIA dramatically increased its reach, through a shift away from

direct contact with international and national English Language Teaching (ELT) experts, towards a distinctive model where ELT practice expertise was embedded in Mediated Authentic Videos accessed on mobile phones, delivered through partnership with Government Teacher Professional Development systems and staff, and supported primarily by teachers' peers (including Teacher Facilitators). From August 2013 to March 2018, over 53,000 teachers participated in EIA: 10,563 secondary teachers and 42,708 primary teachers [C2]. Collectively, these teachers taught approximately 7.4M school children (3.1M primary and 4.3M secondary children) [C2]. More specifically, EIA has achieved impacts on **practitioners, learning and public policy** in Bangladesh by: i) changing the classroom practice of teachers; ii) improving the English Language competence of students; iii) shaping the content of English Language Teaching Curriculum Material and iv) influencing approaches to teacher development in Bangladesh and v) influencing approaches to teacher development outside of Bangladesh, demonstrating global impact.

### i) Changing the classroom practice of teachers

There is evidence that EIA has contributed to changes in teachers' confidence to speak English and use English in the classroom. For example, at a divisional workshop in Rajshahi in 2017, teachers underlined that EIA had triggered inner changes in them, which they saw as a pre-condition for changing students: *"I changed myself, now I am a change maker. Without a change in students, a teacher is 0"* (Assistant Teacher English/secondary and Teacher Facilitator, Rajshahi division, 23.8.2017); *"EIA has developed me personally and professionally"* (participant, Rajshahi Divisional Workshop, 23.8.2017). The participants also reported that they felt more at ease speaking English among themselves and with their students: *"Now I am able to speak in English in any forum"* (participant, Rajshahi Divisional Workshop, 23.8.2017) [C1]. EIA has also brought about changes in the classroom practices of teachers. In 2014-2015, 1,600 teachers provided self-report data, analysis of which indicated that over 71% said they used the teacher development videos every week and over 80% said they used EIA activities in the classroom every week. Government Education Officers observed 4,727 classrooms during this time and found that that 61% of students were seen using English in more than 50% of their talk-time, with 86% of lessons including pair and group work [C3]. Systematic timed observations of 346 lessons by the 2014-2015 cohort of teachers, showed similar changes in practice. The results show that both primary and secondary teachers are using a wide range of activities in the classroom and involving students in these activities. In this study, primary teachers were found to be organising 33% of the time, presenting 29% of the time, asking questions 18% of the time, and giving feedback 19% of the time. Secondary teachers were found to be organising 27% of the time, presenting 38% of the time, asking questions 21% of the time, and giving feedback 15% of the time. This is a change from the baseline study where teachers were observed to be primarily reading from the textbook and rarely involving students in activities [C4]. For 2015-2016 teachers, a quasi-experimental study (including 163 systematic timed lesson observations) found statistically significant experimental effects after only six months, just half-way through the treatment. Primary and secondary teachers spent less time 'presenting' to students (effect size  $r=0.2$ ); student-student talk (pair and group) increased fourfold in primary lessons, from 4%pts to 16%pts (effect size  $r=0.3$ ); whilst in secondary lessons, teachers and students both used more spoken English (effect size 0.2) [C5]. At a Divisional workshop in Rajshahi in August 2017, participants confirmed sustained use of the EIA interactive teaching activities and learners' increased participation in the classes: *"Before EIA, I never used body language, acting and dancing in the classroom. I thought this was only for male teachers [...] that it was not for me. Now I use songs, rhymes, miming, acting, dancing. I feel very efficient in my work. My student teams are standing out in crowd at education and digital fairs. This is thanks to EIA. I changed myself and my sub-district"* (teacher participating in Rajshahi Divisional Workshop, 23.8.2017) [C1].

### ii) Improving the English language Competence of students

There is large-scale evidence for an improvement in learning outcomes for students who are taught by teachers who have engaged with EIA. Over 1,000 students (579 primary, 480

secondary) from the 2014 cohort took part in an end-line study of English Language Competence (ELC), carried out by independent assessors. There were statistically significant differences showing substantial improvements over baseline for both primary and secondary students. For primary students, the pass-rate rose 34.4%pts from 35.2% to 69.6%, whilst for secondary students, the pass-rate rose 8.3%pts, from 74.5% to 82.8% [C6]. For 2015-2016 students, a quasi-experimental study (1,802 students in pre- and post-test) was conducted after only six months, just half-way through the treatment. In treatment schools, the differences between pre- and post-test ELC were larger than in control schools (rising by 0.3 Graded Examination in Spoken English (GESE) grades in treatment, compared to 0.2 grades in control), but at this early stage the differences were not yet statistically significant. However, there were small-to-medium sized experimental effects for rural secondary students ( $r=0.2$ ) and urban primary students ( $r=0.2$ ) [C5]. Discussions with various stakeholders also indicate that teachers acknowledge that being in an EIA school has increased students' confidence and proficiency in using English, in the classroom and among themselves: *"I visited 2-3 classes in EIA schools in Manikgonj district. EIA is very fine; secondary students were spontaneously talking to us; students spoke English very fluently. In Bangladesh, children's attitude towards English has changed. They have a courage for English and think that they can answer all questions. EIA has contributed to this. Students' English results have also improved in the recent years. EIA has contributed to this"* (Director - Secondary at Department of Schools and Higher Education (DSHE), 21.8.2017) [C1].

### iii) Shaping the content of English language teaching curriculum materials in Bangladesh

The EIA Programme team has influenced both primary and secondary curriculum in Bangladesh through its contributions to the work of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) in Bangladesh. BMB Mott MacDonald (lead partner on EIA) conducted two studies that produced recommendations, and the textbooks for primary schools were revised to implement these. EIA then helped review the new textbooks for primary teachers, grades one to five with regards to English language teaching. EIA worked with the Centre for British Teachers, who worked with NCTB, on the textbooks. The textbook revisions included the referencing of EIA classroom audios, where relevant to particular lessons. The new textbooks were distributed to teachers in 2013 (grades one to three) and 2015 (grades four to five). All teachers received EIA classroom audio recordings, as part of the NCTB's distribution of the revised textbooks. The 2015 Terms of Reference for The NCTB Textbook Revision acknowledge EIA inputs into the English Textbooks for grades four to five [C1, C7]. 'Teacher Editions' are versions of the national textbook series that include instructional guides for teachers, on how to use the textbook content to support Communicative Language Teaching. In 2014, EIA technical experts contributed to writing all five Teacher Editions for English language primary teachers (grades one to five) [C8]. Content from EIA print materials (i.e. *Activity Guides*) were integrated into the Teacher Editions, particularly where they gave guidance regarding how to integrate digital audio resources in classroom teaching of specific lesson content. The Teacher Editions were published in August 2016. By 2017 they had been provided in print to every primary school (two per school) and had been distributed to all local Education Offices. They were also made available in soft copy on the NCTB website [C1]. Commissioned by the NCTB, EIA produced 36 audio recordings of 'English for Today' listening texts that accompany the NCTB textbooks for all secondary grades. Together with EIA's own audios, these audios were uploaded on the NCTB website [C1]. The National Curriculum Coordinator Committee approved the audios and in 2014 the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) issued a circular asking all District Education Officers and Upazila Secondary Education Officers to ensure every head teacher/principal of a secondary school downloaded and used EIA audio materials [C9].

### iv) Influencing approaches to teacher development programmes in Bangladesh

EIA materials and models have been integrated into in-service teacher development in Bangladesh through the Subject-Based Training (SBT) in English and the Customised Training Programme-English (CTP-E). SBT was a six-day face-to-face training for in-service teachers managed by the Department of Primary Education (DPE). The SBT Manual integrated 23 EIA

A/V materials, and interactive teaching/learning activities. EIA supported the production of a Guide for trainers (including a DVD with EIA digital contents), and the training of 112 'Master Trainers'. Between 2014 and 2017, 115,000 Bangladeshi teachers have undergone SBT-English, giving EIA inputs a wide reach. SBT has since stopped and has been replaced by the CTP-E. The government has engaged several EIA staff as consultants in the design of the English element of this programme and its supporting materials (e.g. Training Manual) and the programme has integrated some of EIAs core components. For example, use of ICT and online/offline A/V materials is a key focus with all the trainers and teachers getting access to EIA digital A/V materials (17 EIA videos have been integrated with different sessions on different days) [C1]. Furthermore, most of the Government's Master Trainers (MTs) for the CTP-E are people who have been oriented to EIA, including many of EIA's teacher facilitators/teachers: "EIA human resource is our resource" (DPE Deputy Director, 24.8.2017). Among the 31 pilot Master Trainers, 22 have been oriented/exposed to EIA [C1].

#### v) Influencing teacher development programmes outside of Bangladesh

Key stakeholders have testified that EIA has had an impact beyond Bangladesh: "EIA added to the global knowledge and debate around teacher professional development, by proposing a specific model based on 5 elements and by putting teachers at the centre of the classroom and evidencing what works in the classroom and to build teachers' capacities" (DFID Education Adviser, 24.8.2017) [C1]. One example of the global impact of EIA is the Teacher Development Programme (TDP) in Nigeria. TDP, funded by DFID (2013-2019), was implemented in partnership with the Nigerian Federal Government and 5 Northern State Governments. It aimed to improve the quality of teaching for 62,000 teachers in primary and junior secondary schools and in Colleges of Education. Several EIA staff members were commissioned to work with TDP on the construction of materials such as a Facilitators Guide and a Head Teachers Guide. In addition, TDP has modelled its approach on EIA, in that both EIA and TDP are school-based teacher professional development programmes, with a blend of self-study and face-to-face training and support [C1]. In 2017 the scale and quality of impacts achieved by the EIA project were recognised through two awards: The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) award for International Impact (November 2017) and the Pioneer Award for Progressive Education Delivery in H.E (September 2017). The THES judges said that EIA was a: "clear winner for its global impact on English communication abilities in difficult-to-access regions". They commended staff at the OU for their: "innovative and pragmatic solution as well as their collaborative approach, working with intergovernmental agencies and in-country partners" and stated that "The OU's development of teaching materials specifically designed for use on low-cost mobile phones has had a transformative impact on the regions in which they have been deployed".

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact.

- C1. Impact Report. Impact on practitioners, learning and policy. Independent consultants.
- C2. Evaluation Report. Impact on practitioners. DFID.
- C3. Quality Assurance Report. Impact on practitioners. EIA Project Team.
- C4. Research report. Impact on practitioners. EIA Project Team.
- C5. Research Report. Impact on practitioners. EIA Project Team.
- C6. Research Report. Impact on student learning. EIA Project Team.
- C7. Terms of Reference. Impact on public policy. National Curriculum and Textbook Board.
- C8. Letter. Impact on public policy. National Curriculum and Textbook Board.
- C9. Letter. Impact on public policy. Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education.