

Findings from the field – 3

EIA's impact on teachers' and students' English language competence

EIA wants to improve the English of students to improve their prospects for economic well-being and the economic development of Bangladesh. EIA improves what teachers do in the classroom, so that English is learned in a communicative way – not just that students learn *about* English, but they learn to *use it* to communicate. The materials and support for teachers are directed at improving their teaching of English. Changing what is done in the classroom will lead to students improved communication in English. Well at least that is the theory, but does it work?

Research on EIA classrooms certainly shows changes. Teachers and students now speak more in English and both use English the majority of the time. More importantly, the students talk more. This provides a good basis to improve students' English. But of course it is important that, when they use English, they do so properly. Teachers must be competent in English and EIA helps with this.

EIA engaged an internationally renowned body, Trinity College London, to test teachers' communicative language. They went round Bangladesh testing, first when teachers started with the EIA project in early 2010, and again in early 2011, after teachers had had almost a year trying out EIA approaches. Trinity used a 12-point scale to assess English competence.

Chart 1 below shows how the primary teachers improved their English. A primary teacher should score a grade 2 or above to teach Class 3, and almost all are now up to this level (up 10%). EIA has been equally successful with secondary school teachers who need to have at least grade 3: over 90% achieved this (up 13%), as Chart 2 shows.

So did EIA improve their students' English competence? Yes! Charts 3 and 4 show a statistically significant improvement in both primary and secondary students' competence.

Chart 1: Primary teachers' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011

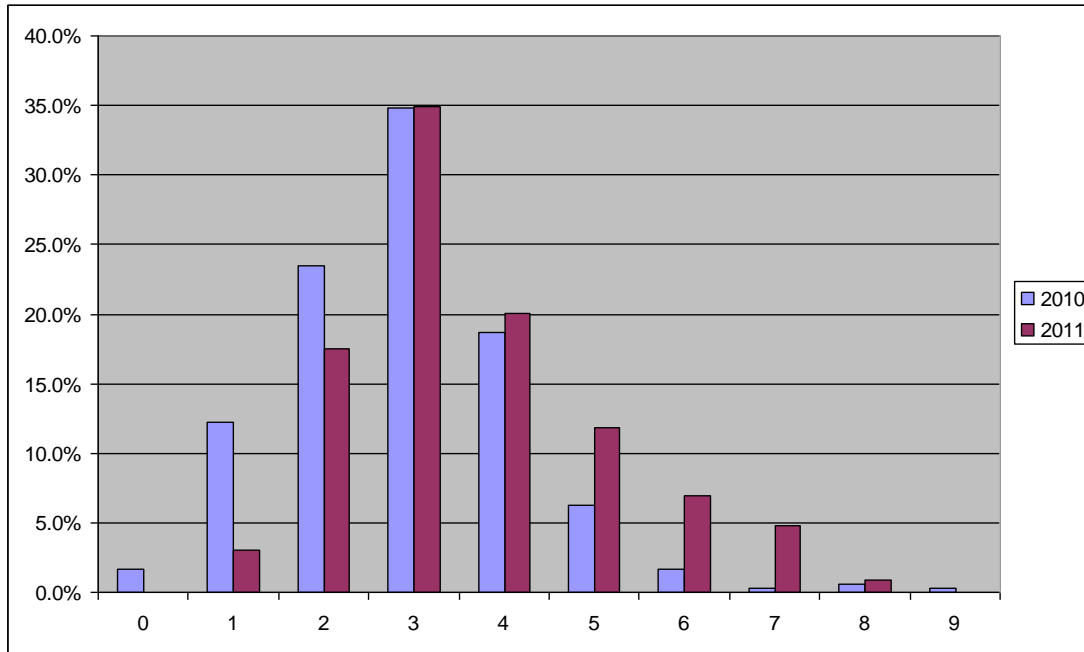


Chart 2: Secondary teachers' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011

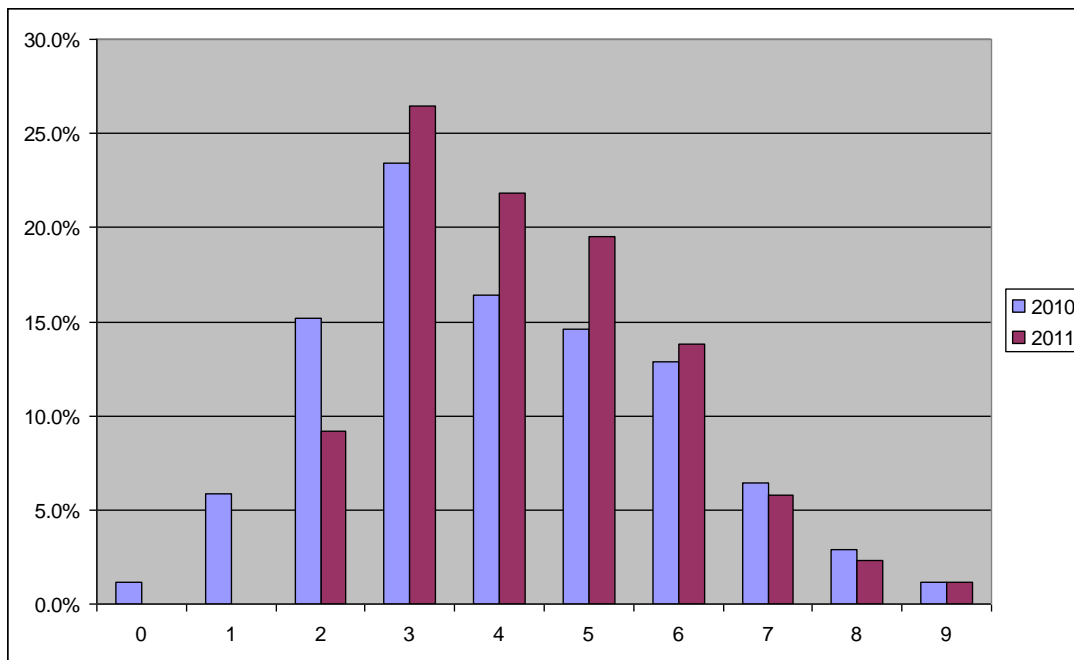


Chart 3: Primary students' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011

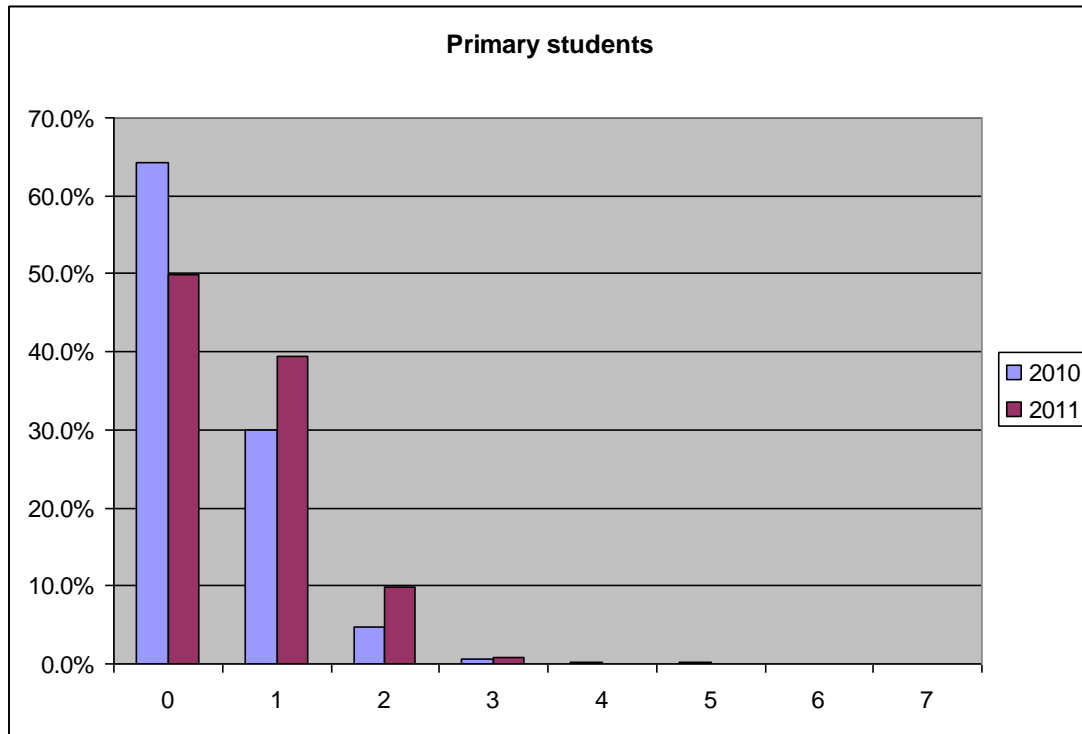


Chart 4: Secondary students' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011

