

ENGLISH  ACTION

Newsletter

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**CHANGING LEARNING
CHANGING LIVES**

Milestone workshops 2011

After one year of successful piloting in some government and two NGO schools, EIA recently organised and conducted a series of milestone workshops for teachers between 20th March and 10th April 2011, in seven regions across Bangladesh. The objectives of those workshops were to:

- i) share good practice and challenges (pedagogical and technological)
- ii) address challenges in classroom practice, and
- iii) strengthen skills in specific language teaching techniques.

Approximately 750 Teachers and Teacher Facilitators (TF) from all over the country participated in these two and a half days workshops, which were facilitated by the ELT experts from the Open University UK, and the EIA Teacher Development Coordinators (TDC).



The objectives of the workshops were achieved successfully. Significant improvement was noticed in teachers' performance (in relation to their communicative language teaching techniques) and their ability to speak English. A great deal of enthusiasm and motivation was observed among the teachers during the workshops. Further to this, a strong need and demand was expressed for continuing support from the project.

The content of the workshops was determined based on a needs assessment exercise with the Teachers, Teacher Facilitators and Teacher Development Coordinators prior to the workshops. Of all the sessions it seemed that the 'skills development sessions' – where the OU UK ELT experts demonstrated lessons using different techniques – were highly appreciated by all teachers.

The main focus of the skills development sessions were to develop teachers' skills, particularly in the areas of: integrating language skills in an English for Today (EfT) lesson, error correction, controlled and free practice of grammar-in-context, elicitation and using posters.



Interestingly, several participants suggested that having experienced an integrated skills lesson with EfT they did not feel completely ready to apply the same approach themselves. This was due to many practical reasons including large classroom sizes, limited language skills of the teachers and students, lack of supportive environment in the schools, and so on. However, the teachers found the practical demonstrations very useful and convincing. There was a very positive buzz at all the primary and secondary workshops across the country.

RME sharing event with stakeholders

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) is considered as the core of the EIA project, not only for its importance in the strategic decision-making process but also for disseminating project outcomes to wider stakeholders. With this aim in mind, on 31st March 2011 an event was held to share EIA's evidence-based experiences and discuss the achievements and impacts of the interventions during the pilot phase. Distinguished guests from the government, donor agencies, educational institutions, NGOs and EIA partner organisations were present at the event.

The event was inaugurated through a welcome speech by John Shotton, Project Director of EIA. In his speech, he briefly described the inception and background of the project. After that, Marc van der Stouwe, Team Leader of EIA, discussed different aspects of the project, and Mourie Nishad, Head of Teacher Training, illustrated the EIA teacher training and support model to the audiences.



Following an introduction to the key RME information-sharing session by Shahamin Zaman, Head of RME, Dr Bob McCormick from the Open University UK presented a summary of the main

findings from the pilot phase of EIA. This discussion particularly covered evidence regarding the English language learning and teaching scenario of Bangladesh. The rationale and findings of studies relevant for EIA, such as teachers English language competence at the pre- and post-intervention stages, were described. Evidence of the changes in minds of both teachers and students and classroom practices were also presented.



The concluding session highlighted some of the key objectives of the event. A critical and constructive discussion took place amongst the stakeholders based on the information shared in the presentations.

Co-hosting the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011

Along with Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA), English in Action (EIA) recently co-hosted the 5th BELTA International Conference from 20th to 22nd May, 2011 in Dhaka. The event created opportunities for EIA to engage widely with the English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals in Bangladesh and from various corners of the world. The theme of the conference was: 'Learning English in a Changing World: Global Perspectives and Local Contexts'.

The conference started with a grand opening ceremony where Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Founder Vice Chancellor, East West University (former Governor Bangladesh Bank) was present as the Chief Guest, and Rasheda K. Chowdhury, Executive Director, CAMPE (former Advisor, Caretaker Government) was present as the Special Guest. Amongst the other distinguished guests, Daniel Davis (Senior Programme Manager, DFID Bangladesh), Charles Nuttal (Director, British



Distinguished guests at the inaugural ceremony of the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011

Council); Lauren H. Lovelace (Director, the American Center), Marc van der Stouwe (Team Leader, EIA); and Dr. Rubina Khan (President, BELTA) were also present at the inaugural session. The inaugural ended with the Keynote Lecture: 'How global trends are reshaping the world of ELT' delivered by David Graddol, an international expert in the field of Global English.



David Graddol delivering the Keynote lecture

Around 550 national and international practitioners working in diverse fields related to ELT participated in this forum for discussion and information dissemination with regard to ELT innovations both in country and beyond. In addition, the event was enriched by a number of ELT experts' knowledge and insights from different countries which initiated critical discourses on issues related to ELT policy and practices. In the keynote speech, Dr David Graddol from City University, Hong Kong, discussed how the global trends in the socio-economic field are constantly reshaping the educational and linguistic landscapes,

directly influencing the world of ELT. The need for English language education, alongside skills training was highlighted. The notion reinforced the issues raised by the speakers at the press conference held prior to the event and inaugural session, where the current English language policy scenario with regard to school and teacher training curriculum in Bangladesh was discussed. From a different angle, in a post-conference note, Dr Amal Padwad, President, English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) later added:

"This conference has brought to the organisers both a great opportunity and a huge responsibility to take the momentum forward, to build a nation-wide community of teachers and consolidate the ongoing professional development work."

The event also created opportunities for regional networking amongst English teachers' associations in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Bangladesh.



National and international practitioners of ELT and related fields

Snapshots from the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011



Rasheda K. Chowdhury, Executive Director, CAMPE, at the inaugural ceremony of the conference



Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Founder Vice Chancellor,
East West University



Marc van der Stouwe, Team Leader, EIA at the
Media Briefing session



EIA booth at the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011



Book stall at the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011



Md. Sikander Mondol, Sr. IT Field Officer, EIA, presenting
at the Conference



Interaction with the audience at the Conference

Regional networking at the conference

Regional networking developed from the idea that there would be a substantial presence of representatives of Teachers Associations (TAs) from South Asia and other regions at the conference. To promote their participations, the conference organisers offered international TA members special discounts on conference registration fees. The TAs that finally joined were: ELTAI (India), SPELT (Pakistan), NELTA (Nepal), ELTAA (Afghanistan) and MELTA (Malaysian). Several papers and workshops were presented by members of these associations and active networking took place throughout the three days.

Panel discussion: On the third day there was a panel discussion on the role of TAs in professional development, participated by TA reps from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, MELTA members were unable to participate. Moderated by Amol Padwad (President ELTAI), the panelists discussed their respective TA's modus operandi and discussed the benefits for English teachers joining their TA. They also fielded questions and comments from the floor.



Representatives from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan

Book launching: The presence of four writers (from three TAs) as well as two publishers (Cambridge University Press and British Council) enabled the conference organisers to hold two ELT book launchings published in 2011. They were Coleman (ed.) *Dreams & Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language*, and Farrell et al (ed.) *English Language Education in South Asia: From Policy to Pedagogy*. The contributors of the books – Amol Padwad, Rubina Khan, Zakia Sawar, and



Book launching ceremony by the authors at the conference

Tony Capstick – and the publishers and distributors all spoke on the occasion.

Post-conference TA meeting: BELTA had previously proposed to organise a post-conference TA meeting. Accordingly, 15 members from five TAs, including four British Council reps (Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) met on 23rd March to identify best practices, share challenges and move towards networking and regional cooperation. The first part of the meeting focused on key challenges facing the TAs and the second part on developing collaboration and networking among them. Several important issues emerged. On the basis of this, it was decided that this collaborative effort should be continued. The British Council supported this endeavour and proposed holding a six-day Hornby regional school, “Sharing best practice – strengthening TAs in South Asia” in mid-December 2011 in Bangladesh with TA reps from Central and South Asia.



TAs leaders & British Council EL reps at post-conference workshop

English Language Teaching (ELT) innovation: Panel discussion

If we were to gather the key words and expressions which recurred at the BELTA conference – in talks, workshops, and in those all important unplanned conversations that took place at the coffee stand or in corridors – ‘innovation’ is bound to be prominent among them. It was fitting, then, that EIA hosted a plenary panel debate on what ‘innovation’ in English Language Teaching (ELT) means to different organisations working in Bangladesh and the wider region.



Mike Solly, Head of Secondary Intervention, EIA

After an opening by Mike Solly (Head of Secondary Intervention, EIA) as the host, setting the scene of innovation in ELT from the global to the local, Dr Arifa Rahman spoke about the importance of reaching new teachers in new ways through the professional network of BELTA – as exemplified so well in the conference itself. This was followed by a presentation from Dr Sharmistha Das (Education Advisor, EIA) on the work

of EIA and which demonstrated how this large-scale ELT project is using innovative methods and technology to reach large numbers of English language teachers. Ivan Bari Shafaat from BRAC University followed this with an interesting exploration of some of the many innovative ways his organisation works with and trains teachers of English.



From left: Ivan Bari Shafaat (BRAC), Dr Sharmistha Das (EIA),
Dr Arifa Rahman (BELTA)

And finally, from the British Council we had a more regional perspective from Sheilagh Neilson, who told us about some of the British Council innovative work in the professional development of teachers across the region. Even though time was limited for questions from the floor, there was some excellent audience participation and the panel discussion ended with a feeling of people wanting more!

Some highlights of the conference

The aim of the 5th BELTA International Conference was to provide a platform for introducing new developments, discussing challenges and sharing best practice and research findings in English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning. The presentations included:

- Plenary papers by invited speakers on the major issues subsumed under the conference theme
- Papers reflecting new developments in ELT, classroom practice and research findings
- Workshops linking theory and practice, and involving the audience in hands-on activities

- Discussions/debates on issues like managing classroom innovation in ELT and the role of teachers associations in professional development
- Poster presentations on online learning

There were a total of 89 presentations – 32% were from overseas; the rest were from Bangladesh –reflecting a medley of practice, research and innovative approaches. Of these, here we highlight two (a paper and a workshop) to illustrate the rich variety that was on offer during the three-day event.

Paper: The language of remittances (Navil Mansur Chowdhury)

Developed country labour markets have increasingly segmented into a primary sector containing attractive jobs and the secondary sector containing jobs that natives shun. However, this demand has been tempered with the introduction of 'quality selective' recruitment policies adopted in developed countries. In the face of a global recession such trends are bound to continue. This paper presented the impact of 'quality selective' recruitment policies in the Persian Gulf labor markets on unskilled Bangladeshi migrants.

The paper claimed that this could be a matter of concern for Bangladesh given that 67.6 percent of all its migrants in 2008 were unskilled or semi-skilled at best. The study showed that Bangladeshi workers are seen to be losing out on better employment opportunities to their more articulate (in English) counterparts from India and the Philippines. The benefits of English skills for these latter groups also extended to making better choices of investment, higher financial literacy and using official channels of remittances as well (UN Report, 2006).

This study suggested that employment prospects for future expatriate workers could be boosted in all services and at all levels with the addition of basic English language skills to their skills set which would translate into higher remittances for the country. This would require a modern English language center under the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) that is capable of adopting modern English Language Training (ELT) methodologies such as conducting a needs analysis, assessment of individuals for the right level and using a task-based learning approach in order to develop and empower the Middle-East labour migrants into a more potent force.

Workshop: So you have a teacher's voice! Enhancing teachers' vocal qualities (Md. Zulfeqar Haider)

This interactive workshop was designed to help teachers with practical ideas for enhancing their voices in the classroom. In developed countries, vocal science is used to improve the voice quality of people engaged in the performing arts such as theatre, film and music. The presenter suggested that this knowledge could also be effectively applied to train teachers to improve their voice projection, particularly of those who teach large classes.

The workshop presented some of the methods and exercises that could be used for this purpose. The mode adopted by the presenter for conducting the session

was hands-on demonstration and active participation, the objective being to help participants understand aspects of voice quality and voice projection through application, exercise and actual practice.

In a fun-filled, rather noisy atmosphere, the presenter encouraged the participants to take part in the exercises. The demonstrations were dramatic. Inhibitions slowly disappeared as teachers found themselves caught up in the action.

During the feedback phase, teachers admitted that they had never realized that a teacher's voice was so important in the classroom. They enthusiastically said they would apply some of the tactics that they had learned but not all of them - it remains to be seen whether they actually keep their word.

An interview with Jeremy Harmer

We were lucky to have the world-renowned ELT expert Jeremy Harmer, as one of the guest speakers at the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011 in Dhaka. Jeremy Harmer has taught in Mexico and the UK, and is currently a course designer and tutor for the MA TESOL at the New School University, New York. He has trained teachers and offered seminars all over the



Jeremy Harmer at the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011

world. He is the author of methodology titles including *How to Teach Writing* (2004), the extensively revised second edition of *How to Teach English* (2007), and the prize-winning 4th edition of *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (2007) – all published by Pearson Education Ltd. He is the General Editor of the Longman methodology list. Among the course materials he has devised are *Just Right* and the *Just* series, published by Cengage Heinle ELT and *Your Turn* (a secondary course published by Langenscheidt). He has recently released a poetry and music CD *Touchable Dreams* (<http://touchabledreams.posterous.com>).

EIA utilised this opportunity to talk to him on various aspects of ELT and learning. The following is a brief interview that EIA conducted with Jeremy Harmer.

Q. What are the ‘conditions’ responsible for successful communicative language teaching (CLT)?

A. *Firstly, the teacher needs a good level of English and the enthusiasm for (and belief in) a communicative approach. But beyond this, the tests have to reflect the kind of methodology that the teacher wants to use.*

Q. How much, in your view, is CLT a Western pedagogy, and how much can it truly be adapted in some developing contexts where a more teacher-centered approach is embedded?

A. *Methodology of any kind generally reflects the societies where the teaching takes place. In that sense, it is possible to suggest that CLT is very ‘Western’. However, the need to communicate in English is international (east, west, north and south) and so all teachers need to try and help students achieve this. This is not easy in very teacher-centered traditions, so we have to go stage by little stage, and build in a lot of teacher training and learner training.*

Q. Does ‘knowledge and understanding’ of the concept of CLT (as opposed to ‘skills’ only) matter for teaching English? (Please elaborate)

A. *All learning (it seems to me) is a balance between knowing and doing. We need to give students a chance to STUDY language construction, but equally they need chances to ACTIVATE their language knowledge and that is why pairwork and groupwork are so important.*

Q. If the assumption is that classroom management, relationship-building and facilitation skills lie at the heart of good teaching, then what are the implications for developing learner-centered pedagogy with large class sizes and lack of space in the classroom?

A. *This is a very big question. In big classes with poor physical conditions the luxurious idea of students working at individual tables with the teacher moving between them is clearly ridiculous! So we have to find other ways of reaching individual students and giving students choice. They can vote on what they want to do next. They can complete sentences with their points of view. They can tell us what they like and don’t like and we can adjust our teaching accordingly. And above all, we can use appropriate pair and groupwork activities so that they have a chance to work with each other.*

EIA: Thanks very much for sharing your views.

Jeremy: *A pleasure! I have loved my two (far too short) visits to Bangladesh!*

Collaboration with Bishwa Shahitya Kendra (BSK)

Recently EIA had a meeting with the inspirational Prof Abu Sayeed from the Bishwa Shahitya Kendra (BSK) or World Book Centre. His impressive vision – that of helping children develop a love for books by putting them directly into their hands and inspiring them with reading and stories in both Bangla and English – has deservedly earned this organization great praise and respect. The promotion of the development of English reading skills in children is clearly an aim that BSK and EIA have in common and we have agreed to cooperate in order to further the visions of both organizations.

Though the exact shape of this cooperation is not confirmed yet, but we feel that developing the reach of the BSK programme to EIA schools will offer students of our teachers a wonderful resource. We will also look into practical ways of helping the teachers to promote this exciting scheme with their students.

Watch this space – we expect to be able to report more on this soon!

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.

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

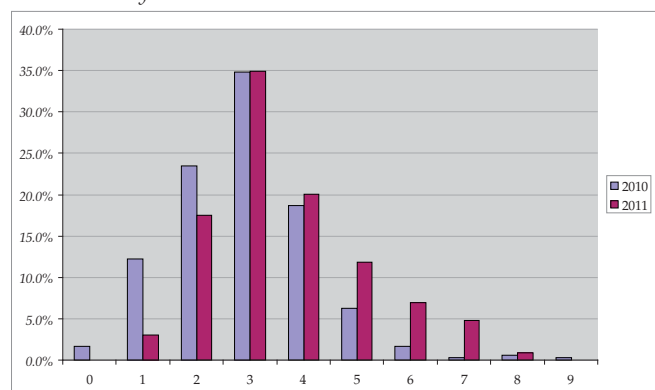
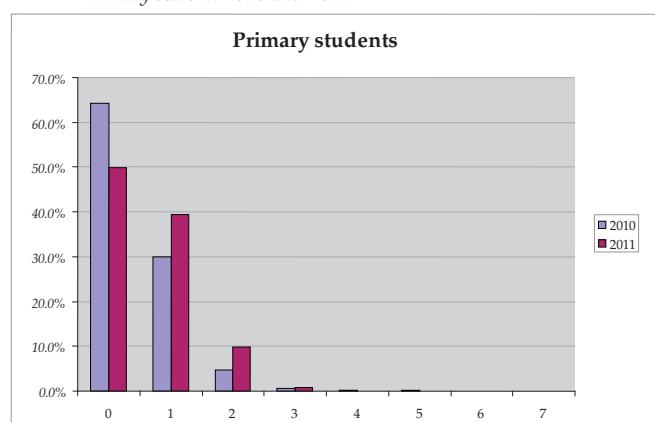


Chart 3: Primary students' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011



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

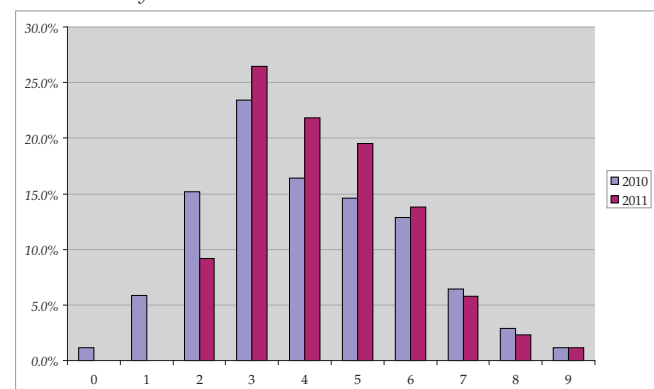
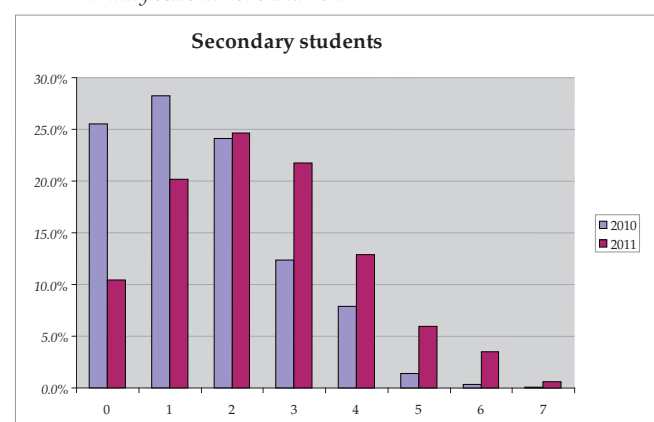


Chart 4: Secondary students' English language competence using Trinity scale in 2010 and 2011



Bishaash & BBC Janala Mojay Mojay Shekha touch the hearts of millions

English in Action's primetime television programmes have managed to make English learning accessible in millions of homes across Bangladesh.

South Asia's first supernatural detective 22-episode drama series, *Bishaash*, captured an audience of 22.5 million over a period of just six months. The accompanying 24-episode game show, *BBC Janala Mojay Mojay Shekha*, attracted an audience over 20 million, according to a recent midline survey conducted by BBC World Service Trust. Both were broadcast on the state-run television channels of Bangladesh, BTV and BTV World.



The viewing figures for *Bishaash* place in on par with the most popular television dramas on Bangladeshi television. Moreover, research showed that 75% of *Bishaash* viewers were compelled to watch the English learning support programme, *Mojay Mojay Shekha*, making the learning show a runaway success as well.



Research conducted in three rural villages showed that, over time, viewers of *Bishaash* and *Mojay Mojay Shekha* improved their speaking and listening ability, and felt

more confident than non-viewers to use English in everyday situations.

"Kamal was doing funny activities and became serious about learning English. When Alex was telling him 2 or 3 times, he was not getting the point, but he had patience and proved that 'now I can'; He proved himself. Then Alex gave him thanks. In this way, they have shown us that many of us don't know English, but we could learn English from others. Many of us can't say things like 'hi' and 'hello'. Alex was helping to increase Kamal's interest to learn English."

Male, 16-25, Barisal



The BBC World Service Trust aims to extend the reach and impact of *Bishaash* and *BBC Janala Mojay Mojay Shekha* through rebroadcast, and has secured prominent evening slots with BTV to begin weekly airing from September 2011. The 16-episode second series of *BBC Janala Mojay Mojay Shekha* will return as a standalone programme with new games and innovative content early next year on primetime BTV.

Stories from the field

English in Fun

English in Action (EIA) started its journey in 2008 to enable classrooms to come alive with actual communication in English. For a long time, implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and learning has been seen as a serious challenge by teachers, students, guardians and administrators.

Previously, so-called CLT classroom situations were fraught with ironies such as – no listening and speaking, no learner autonomy, low motivation and no initiatives to change the existing teaching techniques. Here are some stories that might be considered as evidence of how EIA is making a difference in the setting and changing the perceptions of English Language Teaching (ELT) in a conventional Bangladeshi classroom.

“EIA stimulates me and makes me confident to use English in the classroom as well as to encourage students to use it. I think EIA has shown me the way for teaching English in the classroom in an effective way and I believe if we continue in the same manner, the condition will be improved soon” – Nazrul Islam, Teacher Facilitator, Paba, Rajshahi



“It was class V. The lesson was ‘My Family’. I was highly pleased to see the students speaking in English (about their families). I was curious to test them. I asked several questions about their own family. They were answering all of my questions. Finally they asked about my family, which was really surprising for me. It was a great job by the students.” – Md. Samiul Islam, Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO), Lalmonirhat

“I have been working as a teacher for a long time but I hardly

could apply any technique to make my class enjoyable. But now I became more skilled in applying different techniques such as group work, pair work, learning games, etc. which helps me to make my class very enjoyable for the students.”

Sayera Begum, Teacher, Fulbari 1 GPS, Golapganj, Sylhet

“English class is fun. We can learn easily from the iPod and audio. Now we can understand English conversation and can speak among ourselves. We enjoy games and working in groups during the English class.” – Habibullah, Student of Class 3, 82 No. Kalbari Govt. Primary School, Shyamnagar, Satkhira



“Before we saw that our children often wanted to avoid attending the English classes. Also, in general, they had little interest to come to the schools at all. After EIA started its work here children hardly want to miss any English class. Not only that, during their free time they love chanting the English songs and rhymes learned from classroom.” – Md. Azad Hossain, guardian and Member of School Management Committee (SMC), Khukhondi Government Primary School, Paba, Rajshahi

“EIA is a good project for our primary level. EIA teaching materials and equipment are very effective for our students as they can easily understand their lesson. The unique fact of this programme is the teachers are having an opportunity to review their performance and try to improve it through the monthly Cluster Meetings.” – Abdul Halim Chowdhury, Upazila Resource Center Instructor (URCI), Rangamati

“EIA is more effective than other trainings. The speaking skill of both teachers and students has been increased through this program. Disparity in the class has been removed mostly with the implementation of various EIA methods and modules. I do expect strongly that this project would spread to all over the country.” Md Abdul Mannan, Upazila Secondary Education Officer (USEO), Laxmipur Sadar



EIA has been relentlessly giving its best efforts to bring changes in English classrooms. It has built up a group of dynamic Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs) who are facilitating classroom-based learning through

advanced teacher training and support activities. With this support and training, English teachers are now able to teach their lessons in a more friendly and interactive way. Also, they know how to make best use of technologies such as iPod and speakers in the classroom.

Compiled by:

Zakera Rahman

Principal Teacher Development Coordinator

Mir Md. Saifur Rahman

Programme Officer
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A memorable day in Rangamati

What a day that was! That was 1st day of March, 2011. Passed whole day in a rural school located on an island in the Kaptai Lake nearby the Shuvalong waterfall, surrounded by incredible natural beauty; talked with the teachers, innocent students and with some dwellers of the island (though they know very few English & Bangla) and many more experiences.

There is no local transport facility to go to the school area and to return from the school. Teachers from four different schools of four nearby islands made an engine boat for going to school and returning to home. I join them to go to Hemonto Govt. Primary School. I surprised when I got introduced with the man who was seated in the driving chair. He was the head teacher of the EIA school. The head teachers play the role of riding the boat.



Head Teacher of the EIA school riding the boat

A wooden Ludu was there to make the journey time enjoyable and all the teachers (including the head teachers) enjoyed the journey time playing with the Ludu. After an hour journey we reached the island (named 'Shil Chhari') of EIA school and the responsibility of riding the boat goes to another head teacher. We had to have a ten-minute walk in the hilly path to reach the school which is situated in the top of a hill.



Hilly way to the School

Total number of teachers in the school is only 4 (four) including the head teacher and the number of total students is 96 (pre-primary to class five). The total number of rooms in the school is 6 (six) including the head teacher and teachers' room. All the rooms been named with the names of the students who got scholarship. According to the head teacher of the school, it is a way to inspire the parents and the school aged children for their education.



Assembly time

From the classroom observation of class five I have found that, teacher was delivering lecture and giving some instructions in English. But all the faces were looking blank. To make them understand, teacher was not using Bangla but Chakma language (local language). Because he knows that the students know very few Bangla like English. After the class, I told the class “I want to talk to you” (in English) and then asked them in Bangla whether they have understood or not what I said in English (তোমরা কি আমার কথা বুঝতে পেরেছো?). But nobody was responding. When I was asking the same question several times one student start speaking with the teacher in local (Chakma) language.

According to the teachers voice I came to know that they haven't understood my any word (neither English nor Bangla). Then I try to communicate with them in Bangla with simplest and easiest words. Sometime, I had to take



EIA teacher with class 5 students

help of the teacher as an interpreter. In this situation, ‘Chakma’ is their mother tongue, ‘Bangla’ is their second language and ‘English’ is their third language. Honorable educationalists of our country should think about them and do something to start education in their mother tongue. I think that, it is their right.

However, I like to work with them and want to do something for this underprivileged group of people. I'm very grateful to Allah for giving me the chance to work with them and for giving me such a beautiful day with them. Really, that was a fabulous day which I will never forget.

Md. Abdullah Al Mamun

Researcher, EIA
Institute of Education and Research
University of Dhaka

The sun of expectation is smiling behind the dark clouds

I have been teaching English for about 20 years. But before having EIA training I used to speak in Bangla in my English language classes. In that way the target language was being ignored. Instead of illustrating the situations and giving ample examples, I used to encourage students to memorize and even cram grammatical rules and definitions. For this reason the learners were unable to speak in English.

After having EIA training, I tried my best to speak in English almost all the time in my English class. It creates an English speaking atmosphere in the class. This practice also removes students' panic, inertia and shyness in speaking English. Now, the students also try to speak in English inside the classroom, out of the classroom and even at their residences. I think the students enjoy it very much. After joining EIA trainings I started to practice EIA suggested techniques in my

classroom. I often use iPod in my English language classes. I observe that most of the students are interested to participate in various activities of the class. I think I am successful to make my class ‘student-centered’. I am proud of my success. In this way the students get ample opportunities to express and share their ideas and thoughts without any hesitation. They are extremely motivated and encouraged. They are very much interested to act Role Play, Favourite Word Games, Dialogue Practice, Choral Dialogue, Guessing Games, Predictive Listening, Listening and Responding, Songs for Language Practice and what not. I became astonished to see that my students spontaneously asked me to arrange Favourite Word Games. They enjoy the game very much. To develop speaking skills Favourite Words Game is very effective. By practicing Choral Dialogues I observed that the weaker students also become more active and cheerful.



I strongly believe speaking skill is the heart of communicative approach. The participatory activities and co-operative learning process can not be ensured without it. To develop speaking skill there is no alternative of oral practice. Oral practice is indeed the quickest way to learn a language properly. Language is primarily speech. So language must be learnt orally first. Even a person who does not know the alphabets, can easily and spontaneously speak a foreign language if he lives with the native speakers for few years. Speaking skill helps a lot to correct pronunciation. To travel abroad and even to get a good job, speaking skill is a must.

Though now English is considered as our second language, we are unable to establish its due status till now. Especially at secondary level most of our beloved students and even most of the teachers are unable to speak in English fluently. I strongly believe that if we practice the techniques of EIA and use EIA materials in our class room, we will overcome our problems. I am optimistic, if we try heart and soul, we will reach our goal. I have not given up hope. I believe that the sun of expectation is smiling behind the dark clouds.

At last I would like to say that we, the trainees of EIA are very lucky to have such a unique opportunity for our professional development. To overcome our all sorts of lacking, I think iPod is an excellent device. It is a blessing for the teachers. It is very much important to make real life atmosphere in our class room. To create real life situation in our class room it has no alternative. So, we are grateful to the EIA authority.

Khaleda Khanam

Asstt. Teacher

Datta Para Girls' High School

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My experience at the 5th BELTA International Conference 2011

I live in Lalmonirhat. It is a rural area of Bangladesh. I teach in Bangladesh Railway Govt. Children Park High School, which is situated in Lalmonirhat. My school is a part of EIA intervention. On May 2011, EIA has jointly hosted the 5th BELTA International Conference and I was a lucky participant of this conference. This was the first conference that I have attended in my life. Before this I didn't know anything about conferences. Therefore, I was afraid as it was my first time and I was thinking what to do in the conference. On the inauguration day, I arrived at 9 am at the BIAM Foundation, Dhaka. At first, I did the registration and completed other formalities. I entered into the auditorium at 10 am. I was surprised to see the huge gathering and everything was very new to me. The conference started with an opening ceremony and a presentation by the Keynote speaker- David Graddol.

By realizing the size and importance of this conference, I thought, I am a very small person for such a big conference. Just after the inauguration session, the main conference started with five simultaneous presentation sessions. I was very excited to attend different workshops and presentations. Before this conference I never talked to people in English all the time. But here, I prepared myself

to talk to another person in English and I was successful. I adjusted with the environment and slowly started to understand everything in the conference. I joined many sessions such as Judith Hudson's 'Classroom Observation' session and enjoyed myself and learnt many systems. On the second day, I attended a very important session of Dr Amol Padwad 'Teachers as lifelong learners' and I think this was the best session of the conference. I hope to use many things that I have learnt from this conference to develop my professional activity and my own status. During these three days, I got to know many people. I spoke in English with all of them and this time I was not afraid. It was wonderful to be a part of the experience sharing of many national and international English Language Teaching (ELT) experts. I will apply the techniques that I have learnt in my classroom. I am proud that I have attended the conference. My English speaking power has developed. At last, thanks to EIA for giving me such an opportunity.

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