Building a community of shared practice by localizing externally-derived professional development in educational reform'

John McKeown
Senior Lecturer, English Education, Mevlana University,
Konya, Turkey
jmckeown@mevlana.edu.tr

Michael Diboll,
Assistant Professor, Bahrain Teachers College, Manama,
Bahrain
mdiboll@hotmail.com

Abstract: This research focuses on sociolinguistic aspects of education reform in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) region and the strategies by which the achievement of 'linguistic convergence' and corresponding 'cultural convergence' or 'optimal convergence' can enhance in-service teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) participant learning. This professional reflection, situated within the evolving context of reform underway in Bahrain, is based on research conducted at the Bahrain Teachers College (an autonomous professional college founded in 2008 within the University of Bahrain) during 2008-2010. The data, gathered from in-service CPD modules with mid-career Bahraini teachers, includes a wide range of practice-based sources including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observation.
Managing the shift from externally-prepared in-service CDP, toward contextualizing the materials, curriculum, and program delivery to the cultural, social, and educational environment of Bahrain is challenging. Developing "ownership" of new approaches to learning, can make effectively localize the training at the classroom level. The data points to ways that balance the learning needs of local in-service teachers with the internationalizing imperatives of multinational education consultancy:

KEY WORDS: Linguistic convergence, teaching environment, continuing professional development, optimal convergence

Introduction

The study focuses on the evolving Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) and the factors that impact on the quality of participants' CPD experience including the relevance of CPD provision (and the impact of this on participants' attitudes to learning and developing practice), and, directing the BTC CPD programme in a way that builds on previously derived materials, while enhancing the participant experience and maximising professional development potential for positive change.

The CPD curriculum was introduced by facilitators from the National Institute of Education, Singapore, BTC's lead consultant on education reform.

Currently, CPD modules are offered at Cadre levels 4-8. To obtain promotion from one salary level to the next highest, Bahraini state-sector teachers must complete 360 hours of CPD (twelve x thirty-hour CPD modules) within a four-year period.

In order to carry out this research effectively, a needs assessment focussing on motivation, and satisfaction of BTC PD participants was required. In regards to the specific needs of in-service Bahraini participants, interested stakeholders had undertaken limited background research on participants' needs.

Background

During 2008-2009, and the first semester of 2009-10, NIE was responsible for the delivery of CPD modules, using Singaporean facilitators working at University of Bahrain (UoB). The second semester 2009-10 was the first semester of BTC's lead for CPD provision. The focus of delivery had been on the transfer of the 41 modules developed by NIE.

In order to render CPD relevant to the needs of mid-career teacher, Bahraini CPD participants, this study focuses primarily on the language of instruction, although it is hoped that it will also have a wider relevance

encompassing participant motivation, participant satisfaction, cultural relevancy of CPD materials and delivery, and, participants' expectations. This focus goes beyond 'technical rationality' where participants are viewed as passive learners (Schön, 1983, 1987).

BTC's CPD provision began with the delivery of 17 NIE-derived thirty-hour CPD modules during March and April 2010. These covered topics in Foundation, Maths, and Science with a maximum enrolment of 460 participants. In May and June 2010 a further batch of ten CPD modules were delivered, covering the same subject areas, with an enrolment of 300 participants.

Ethics

Participants, both facilitators and course participants, were informed that coursework and data derived from surveys would be used anonymously for the purpose of this research, and were given an opt-out option if requested (no participants did). BTC Heads' Council granted permission to adapt CPD provision to gather data for this specific research purpose. The Heads' Council also authorised the use of BTC materials otherwise deemed confidential.

Review of Theory

Theory is derived from three areas: Reflective Practice (RP); Sociolinguistics and Communication Theory, with a focus on the Arab World; and, Studies in Cross-cultural Communication
The primary point of reference for reflective practice is Donald Schön (1983, 1987), supplemented by more contemporary sources, including Bigg's and Tang's, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (2007).

Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory ("CAT"; 1978, 1991) provides a starting point, supplemented by Saravanan's work on sociolinguistic aspects of pedagogy and education reform in Singapore (1985). More recent Arab World language use data is borrowed from Bassiouney (2009). Theoretical insights into Cross-cultural Communication are informed by the work of Berger (1979), Gundykunst (2005), Hampden-Turner (2004), and Hofstede (2001).

Timeframe

Data collection began with observations of NIE CPD delivery at BTC. February through December 2009, with the following activities used to assess NIE provision effectiveness, and to gain insights into how this provision might be improved and fine-tuned to make it better-suited to a Bahrain context: observations of NIE-delivered CPD sessions; post-delivery tutors' focus groups; SWOT analyses; and, interviews with CPD participants.

The paper focuses on research activities on-going throughout CPD sessions beginning with one cohort of 17 sections of CPD (21 March - 6 May 2010), and with a second cohort of 10 sections (23 May - 5 July 2010) and included:

- A mid-course initial survey gathering qualitative feedback from CPD participants in two sections, one facilitated by an Arabic speaking tutor, the other by a non-Arabic speaker

- An end of course on-line survey gathering data from CPD participants in two sections

- An on-line end-or-course tutor survey gathering quantitative and qualitative data from all 12 BTC faculty members (Arabic speakers and non-Arabic speakers) delivering PD modules

- End of course grades from all sections

The activities were conducted during class sessions. Certain issues emerged as significant to the effective delivery of CPD; the language of learning was the most significant issue raised consistently by both participants and facilitators. Facilitators also noted motivational and related attitudinal issues, while participants further mentioned issues of cultural appropriateness, the applicability of the materials used in a Bahrain context, and the perceived "foreignness" of the materials they had to work with.

Language issues

The language issues were significant as NIE-courses were delivered in English, and all course materials were written in English. No NIE tutors spoke Arabic, and nearly all of them were Education specialists, with little or no background in specialised English Language Teaching (ELT) or Cross-cultural Communication.

Communication was further complicated by the fact that many participants had difficulty in understanding the accents and English usages of many of the Singaporean facilitators. Singapore has its own dialect of English,

"Singlish", characterised by Chinese-influenced intonation patterns, different stress patterns, the simplification of consonant clusters, different word-order, and additional morphemes derived from Chinese dialects and from Malay (Saravanan: 1985, 67).

While like most Singaporean professionals, the facilitators used "Singapore British English" (SBrE) as their professional dialect, the pronunciation, syntax, and vocabulary of SBrE is often powerfully influenced by Singlish, particularly when used by academics, to the extent that SBrE and Singlish can be seen as two ends of a continuum of Singaporean English dialect use, rather than as two discrete dialects (Saravanan: 1985, 68-8). Thus, the language of delivery was doubly "foreign" to Bahraini participants: foreign because it was in English, and, foreign again, because it is in a form of English unfamiliar to Bahrainis.

SBrE is well established as a language of instruction at all levels of the Singaporean education system and across subject areas. It is an official national language in a multilingual, multiethnic island nation, and functions as an important unifier for Singaporean society. Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil, in recognition of the linguistic diversity of Singapore (Saravanam: 1985, 65).

None of this is true for Bahrain. Although English is widely used in Bahrain, particularly in the commercial sector, it has no official or legal status. While English is taught from Grade 6 in Bahraini schools, it is taught as a *foreign* language and is not the language of instruction for any core curriculum subjects. Even at BTC, the college's regulations state:

> *"The official language of BTC shall be Arabic; the BTC Governing Council upon recommendation of the BTC Council shall admit other languages in teaching, research and professional activity as are necessary in the light of standards of international excellence of the programmes"* (Article 4,H)

Bahrain, like most Arab states uses Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (a language learned at school but which is seldom a natural means of spoken communication) as the sole official language (Bassiouney: 2009, 211).

In this highly diverse linguistic context, Standard English serves as a common language of professional discourse, and as a national unifier (Saravanan, 69). English does not officially play this role in Bahrain, and there is not the same level of awareness at a public policy level of the dynamics of pluralingualism as is found today in Singapore.

Singaporean facilitators received little briefing on Bahrain, Bahraini culture, and language use or level of the participants. As a result, it was perhaps too straightforward for NIE's otherwise highly skilled facilitators to make assumptions about the status and role of English in Bahrain based on Singapore experience. Circumstances could be interpreted that a "culture clash" had unwittingly been set up, precisely the sort of situation that ought to be avoided when implementing an education change project (McKeown, 2005), already seen by many as being politically controversial.

It ought to be noted that there is a significant generational difference in the English-language abilities of the middle-aged, mid-career Bahraini teachers on PD courses compared to those of the much younger "globalised" Bahrainis on BTC's B.Ed. and PGDE programmes. While younger students generally have a very positive attitude toward English, this is not necessarily the case with older teachers, who sometimes see the spread of English in Bahrain as a form of "linguistic imperialism."

Linguistic convergence

Linguistic convergence is a key factor in effective and positive cross-cultural communication. Sociolinguist Howard Giles points out that "convergent communicative acts reduce interpersonal differences", creating an atmosphere conducive to co-operation across cultures and language groups, while "divergent" acts in which "speakers accentuate speech and non-verbal differences", can be used as a defensive mechanism to reinforce an "us and them" dichotomy that inhibits effective communication (1991, 7-9).

Effective communication is a key element in change management because change, however necessary, often contains an element of fear. Michael West, Professor of Organisational Psychology at Aston Business School, states that "It's not change we fear, but the place in between. . . there's nothing to hold on to . . .". In a similar vein, Vikky Wright, President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development says "It's not about changing organisations, it's about changing people, being ready for the change on time" (CIPD, "Managing Change", at 5'.10" onwards).

It can be seen that divergent communication reinforcing a natural uneasiness about change in a politically charged context might constitute a significant threat to the effectiveness of NIE's delivery of CPD programmes at BTC. Whereas the problematic use of English outlined above undoubtedly created straightforward inter-linguistic communication problems, there were motivational and attitudinal issues reported by NIE facilitators, and the cultural inappropriateness and foreignness mentioned by participants might have been exacerbated by, or even created by, a retreat into divergent communication on the part of both facilitators and tutors.

Profile of Participants

This survey, conducted with 38 participants in May at BTC, had two sections, demographic data, and participant's course satisfaction.

A sample of 38 participants enrolled in two sections of the Level 5 course EPD5001, *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning* surveyed in May 2010, yielded the following results:

- Language use: 57.9% self-identified as speakers of Arabic only; 35.9% self-identified as bilingual Arabic-English; 2.6% self-identified as bilingual Arabic-Other language

- Genders were balanced more or less evenly, 52% to 48% in favour of females

- The vast majority or participants were in their 30's: 60.5% were in their early thirties, 26.3% were in their later thirties; just over 13% were older, in age bands falling between 40 and 60+

- Years experience as teachers: the overwhelming majority, 76.3% had between 6 and 10 years' experience, this is in keeping with their status as Level 5 teachers; 18.4% had between 11 and 15 years experience, while 5.2% had between 20 and 30 years teaching experience

- 39.5% were primary teachers, 26.3 taught at intermediate level, 34.2% were primary teachers, and 2.6% identified as "other"

- The largest single group of subject specialists were Arabic teachers, at 20.6%; 14.7% were English specialists, 11.8% taught Islamic Studies, 11.8% taught History, 11.8% taught Maths, and a further 11.8 taught Physical education; smaller percentages taught in Business, Science, or as General Class Teachers at primary level.

The fact that 60.5% of the sample self-identified either as Arabic-only speakers, or as speakers of Arabic and another language other than English, with less than 40% self-identifying as bilingual Arabic-English is highly significant for a course which was delivered entirely in English by NIE, and for which the NIE-derived course materials are entirely in English.

Data regarding participants' self-identification in terms of language ability corresponds well to their subject specialisations: the largest single specialisation presenting in this sample was Arabic, at 20.6%. Further, the combined percentage for specialisations that are taught either entirely in Arabic, or with very little English, was 46.2%.

The fact that 60.8% of participants taught in classes in which English was hardly ever used, while 60.5% of participants self-identified as non-English speakers brings into question a rationale for English-only provision.

Response to the data

In order to address the bilingual language issue as indicated in the data, a variety of approaches were devised in programme delivery by both Arabic and non-Arabic facilitators of CPD modules:

- delivering teacher talk in a mix of about 70% Arabic, 30% English, code-switching ("the alternating use of two or more recognisably different language variants within the same text", Dickins et al 2002: 233) for technical terms

- using about MSA on the whiteboard, often scribed by participants

- encouraging participants to work collaboratively to produce their own Arabicisations (or 'Bahrainisations'), of English-derived concepts. Rather than merely translating, the aim here was to support students in understanding the concept, and to express it in Arabic, using metaphors and examples derived from real Bahraini usage and experience, a form of "cultural transplantation" (Dickins et al 2002: 32)

- allowing group discussions to take place in Bahraini dialect ("natural" language use for brainstorming), with presentations and demonstrations of teaching given either in standard languages, English or MSA

- allowing coursework, lesson plans, posters, to be produced in Arabic

- using translated bilingual handouts and other materials

- reducing the number of heavily English-language laden power-point presentations by simplifying the language used, or replacing some of the slides with all-Arabic or bilingual versions

- using targeted bilingual support for explanation of key concepts and concept-checking .

Results of the Mid-Course survey

This survey gathered qualitative data on participant satisfaction with the course EPD 5001, *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning* (CL). The 38 participants arranged themselves into gender-specific groups, the smaller group being female, the larger two group being male. Participants were instructed to brainstorm about the course with an emphasis on how it could be improved. Below are main points presented by each group summarised in note form:

Female group

- Overall experience was that the class was "refreshing"

- Participants felt empowered by learning new techniques

- Primary general classroom teachers found the course less useful, due to the lack or primary school focus

- Most participants though that more Arabic is "a must" on this course

- Most participants found the English language handouts and PPPs difficult and confusing

- After work sessions, and the location (at BTC in the far south of the island) were highly inconvenient

- PD sections should be organised on a subject-specific and/or a level-specific basic (e.g., sections for primary teachers, section for English teachers, etc.)

Male Group 1:

- The course needed a better and more diverse range of resources

- Participants needed the opportunity to practice CL strategies in their schools and report back during PD classes

- Arabic should be the language of instruction, with supplementary resources in English

- PD courses should be run during the summer after the school exams period

- Participants should have hands-on assistance in applying CL strategies in schools

Male Group 2:

- Core CL concepts and practices should be developed through their application in schools

- All PD classes should be bilingual Arabic-English

- The course curriculum should be clearer and written in Arabic

- There should be an active internet connection in class

- There should be a more diverse range of learning materials

- PD tutors should visit Bahraini schools

Participants' End-of-course survey

This survey, conducted with 38 participants in May at BTC, had two sections, demographic data, and participant's course satisfaction.

The results showed substantial numbers of participants (11- 44%) 'always' using the ten Cooperative Learning (CL) strategies highlighted in the course, with large majorities using these approaches either 'often' or 'sometimes'. Only small minorities (1.5% to 3%) reported that they used these approaches only 'rarely', or 'never'. These results are impressive considering that prior to taking this course most of the participants had little or no experience in CL.

A majority of 65% of participants rated tutor-participant interaction as 'excellent', with 24% rating it as 'very good'. Participant-participant interaction was rated at 46% 'excellent', with 40% rated 'very good'. Language use in class sessions was rated at 42% 'excellent', and 26% 'very good'. Only 5% of respondents thought that language use on the courses was either 'below average', or 'poor'.

Tutors' End-of-course survey

The 12 tutors facilitating PD sessions from March to May completed an end-of-course survey. Assessing the relevance of the course materials to the Bahraini cultural context opinion was divided, 25% of tutors thought it was 'excellent', 33%, 'very good', 25%, 'good', and 16% 'satisfactory'. While no tutors thought it was 'unsatisfactory', tutors did add comments on the cultural suitability of the materials, for instance:

> *"I would suggest that the NIE PD materials be consistent with the cultural and contextual factors associated with the participants' life and educational experiences, their working conditions and learning environment."*
>
> *"Generally, the NIE materials were satisfactory, although too focused on the Singapore setting."*
>
> *"Overall, the materials, although relevant to the subject area, were not at a level the participants could grasp quickly. There was also little breadth to the topics covered."*
>
> *"These materials need revision, and more Bahrain relevant materials developed."*
>
> *"I needed to make a few modifications because of cultural context. But overall it is very well prepared. Also, I needed to add more demonstrations based on availability of materials. We did not have teaching materials."*
>
> *"I'd try to get more materials translated into Arabic and use those more."*
>
> *"I would have an Arabic-speaking tutor visit the class earlier than I did to provide translation. I would also give the participants class time to prepare their assignments so I could check to make sure they understood the assignment rather than relying on the English-speakers' assurances that everyone's 'got it'."*

Concerning the language of tuition, 91% of tutors thought that the courses should be bilingual, and 9% thought they should be taught in Arabic only. Not a single tutor supported English-only provision.

When offered bilingual teaching options, 80% favoured bilingual versions of the NIE materials, and 20% Arabic only versions. 90% favoured BTC developing its own bilingual teaching materials, and 40% favoured bilingual co-teaching. 67% of tutors thought that enhanced bilingual provision was the single most important thing that could be done to improve participants' learning experience.

On motivation, 33% of tutors thought their participants were 'somewhat motivated', although 25% considered them to be 'very motivated'. Tutors own attitudes toward PD were divided: 47% said they were 'enthusiastic' about teaching it again, while 33% said they would either 'rather not', or 'certainly not' want to teach PD again.

End of course grades

Assessment of NIE CPD is designed with a pass/fail grade. The individual assessment component is 30% of the total, and the group project at 40%. Most assessment is either for group work assessed on a group basis, or for collaboration.

At present, the BTC is obliged to follow the UoB system for academic grading, which has grade bands from F to A, with plus or minus grades, e.g., C-, C, and C+, separated by three marks. This schema is obviously designed with summative, exam-type assessments in mind, where getting one or two questions right or wrong can meaningfully distinguish between a C and a C+. This schema does not fit well with PD courses, where only a minority part of the mark is given for purely individual effort. When marked according to the NIE rubric, successful completion of the tasks assigned on these PD courses will in all likelihood lead to an academic grade in the A or B range.

However, the final grades for sections were interestingly divergent. Several facilitators who diligently aimed for linguistic convergence had 100% pass rate with many grades in the A and B range. The final results posted by Dr. X and Dr. Y make an interesting point of contrast.

Dr. X is a non-native speaker of English and an experienced practitioner. However, Dr. X did not know Arabic and used English exclusively. Dr. Y, also a non-native speaker of English, knows no Arabic, and is an experienced educator and an active researcher. In the course, English was used exclusively. Neither facilitator opted for bilingual support.

Dr. X's section had 27 participants. With 11 no-shows, and four drop-outs, there were 7 passes: 4 A-grades, 1 B; and two Cs. There were 5 fails resulting from non-completion of course work. Dr. Y's had 32 enrolled participants with 14 no-shows. The remaining participants achieved 5 A-grades, 6 Bs, and 1 C. 7 fails were due to non-completion of coursework. Although popular and competent tutors in graduate and undergraduate courses, both Dr. X and Dr. Y were the subject of subject of formal CPD participant complaints regarding attitude and communication skills.

Analysis

In the mid-course survey, all groups identified the lack of Arabic as a weakness, and individual participants reported this to be a serious weakness. All groups stressed the need for bilingual learning materials, and/or bilingual instruction. Some groups reported that in addition to the language issue, PD materials should be developed to make them more relevant in a Bahraini context.

Based on findings, those tutors who made significant efforts to factor bilingualism into the existing NIE-derived provision seemed to have positively enhanced the participant's learning experience.

Giles and Smith (1979) cite a number of factors that influence the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication: "similarity attraction", that "the more similar are attitudes and beliefs are to certain others the more likely it is we will be attracted to them" (47); the "social exchange" process, "the rewards attending a convergent act, that is an increase in attraction or approval" (48); "causal attribution", where "we interpret other people's behaviour, and evaluate persons in themselves, in terms of the motivations and intentions that we attribute as the cause of their behaviour (50); "intergroup distinctiveness", wherein members of different groups, when they are in contact, "compare themselves on dimensions that are important to them" (52). Building positive inter-cultural relations and effective communication depends on aligning these factors to achieve "optimal convergence" leading to positive inter-evaluation (53-4).

Thus, focusing on the importance of language in tutor-participant relations is of value to other BTC PD faculty, especially non-Arabic speaking faculty, as it enables outsiders to achieve optimal convergence in a cultural setting which values "a close long-term commitment to the member 'group'" where "loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules" (Hofstede, *Cultural Dimensions: Arab World*).

Eckert (2005) calls this a "community of practice":

> *An aggregate of people who come together on a regular basis to engage in some enterprise: a family, a linguistics class, a garage, band, roommates, a sports team, even a small village. In the course of their engagement, the community of practice develops ways of doing things – practices. And these practices involve the construction of a shared orientation to the world around them – a tacit definition of themselves in relation to each other, and in relation to other communities of practice"* (quoted in Bassiouney: 2009, 94).

Clearly, BTC CPD classes are, in this sense, communities or practice, bilingual, cross-cultural communities, in each of which a unique 'social meaning' is constructed in the interactions between participants and tutor, and, perhaps more significantly, between the participants themselves.

Therefore, there is a need for CPD tutors to 'firm up' their modelling micro-levels of community of practice by careful consideration of the roles of language and culture in achieving optimal convergence. This is particularly the case where socio-cultural dynamics can constitute a serious obstacle to effective communication, and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The mid-course survey results suggest that to achieve optimal convergence, it is not necessary for non-Arab tutors to be fluent in Arabic in order to be successful in facilitating learning, even with groups where over half the participants self-identify as "Arabic only" speakers. Rather, it is sufficient that participants are allowed to use Arabic for discussion and presentation; that bilingual resources are employed; and, that the tutor uses *some* Arabic and signals interest and respect for participants' cultural perspectives. This minimises "perceived threat" and "uncertainty", which are serious obstacles to effective inter-cultural communication (Berger 1979, 133-4), and helps achieve "optimal convergence."

By respecting the importance of language and culture in the sessions, several tutors were able to achieve greater levels of optimal convergence. This led in turn to positive learning outcomes for the participants, as evidenced by the participants' end-of-course survey in which participants, previously unfamiliar with CL techniques reported high levels of usage across ten different strategies.

The tutor's end-of-course survey indicated an awareness of the importance of language and cultural issues. The overwhelming majority of tutors (91%) were strongly in favour of enhanced bilingual provision, both in terms

of human and material resources. Most commented on the difficulties encountered in working with the existing English-only materials and many reflected on the need to make the materials more relevant to the Bahraini cultural context.

Subsequent experience with tutors with little or no Arabic showed that linguistic convergence can still take place, and still be nearly as effective as the convergence that takes place between an Arabic-speaking facilitator and Arabic-speaking participants. Often a "gesture" towards convergence is all that is needed to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural convergence. Tutors received comparable positive evaluations for respectfulness and attitude, demonstrating the way that in cross-cultural communication language skills and cultural sensitivity are equally valuable.

However, "linguistic convergence" either on the level of language or dialect can have a very positive influence on morale, attitudes, and motivation, creating an ownership of learning for the participants, and, genuine inclusion for the tutor. Thus, Arabicisations of core concepts and practices that can come out of "convergence learning" between Arabic-speaking tutors and participants are a significant contribution to existing knowledge. The supporting data confirms that improving tutor-participant communication is an essential aspect for the learning environment, positively influencing participants' perception of culturally "Other" tutors, and, improving participant-participant communication.

However, it also shows the need for improvement in inter-personal cross-cultural communication to be supplemented by the development of bilingual and culturally sensitive and relevant course materials. During these PD sessions tutors had limited opportunities to develop such materials because adaptations of NIE-derived materials had to undergo a process of approval that was not feasible in the given time-frame.

The data demonstrates conclusively that participants' needs, attitudes, and expectations are rooted in a cultural context and in evolving communities of practice, and this realization feeds directly into on-going discussions around how teaching and learning on CPD can be made more effective.

Conclusion

In his *Language Policy and Language Planning: From nationalism to globalisation* Wright (2004) states:

Language policy is primarily a social construct - policy as a culture construct rests
primarily on other conceptual elements – belief systems, attitudes, myths – the whole
complex that were are referring to as linguistic culture, which is the sum totality of ideas,
values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious stricture, and all the other cultural 'baggage'
that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background. (276).

At a macro- and a micro-level, the public policy economic and educational reform project of which BTC is a part involves every aspect of what Wright calls 'linguistic culture'. It is not unsurprising, therefore, that this study confirms the centrality of Giles' linguistic 'optimal convergence' to effective cross-cultural communication in BTC's CPD classrooms.

In short, if CPD externally-derived provision is to be effective, the 'language question' cannot be avoided. This study opens a path to research the importance of linguistic and cultural factors at work in CPD, and the bridges it can establish between cultures in an increasingly globalized educational context.

References

Bassiouney, R. (2009) *Arabic Sociolinguistics.* Edinburgh, UK: EUP.

Berger, C. "Beyond Initial Interaction: Uncertainty, Understanding, and the Development of Interpersonal Relationships" in Giles, H and St. Clair, R. *Language and Social Psychology.*

Biggs, J. and Tang, C. (2007) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University.* (3rd edition)Maidenhead, UK: OUP.

Boise State University. (2007) *Performance Management: Setting SMART Objectives.* http://hrs.boisestate.edu/td/pdf/SMARTgoals.pdf Accessed 15th July 2010.

Bosch, K. (2006) *Planning Classroom Management: A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cohen, L. Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education (6th Edition).* Oxford: Routledge.

Dickins, James. Hervey, S. and Higgins, I. (2002) *Thinking Arabic Translation: a Course in Translation Methods, Arabic to English.* London, Routledge.

Giles, H. (ed.) *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Sociolinguistics.* Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1991.

Giles, H. and Smith, P. "Accommodation Theory: Optimal Levels of Convergence" in Giles, H. and St. Clair, R. *Language and Social Psychology.*

Giles, H. and St. Clair, R. (1979) *Language and Social Psychology.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Gopinathan S. & Vanithamani Saravanan . (1983) "Varieties of English and Education Linguistics": *Singapore Journal of Education.* 7: 64-71

Gudykunst, W.B. (2005) *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hampden-Turner, C. Trompenaars, F. (2004) *Managing People Across Cultures.* Chichester: Capstone.

Heil, G. Bennis, W. Stephens, D. (2000) *Douglas McGregor, Revisited: managing the human Side of the enterprise.* New York: Wiley.
Hofstede, Geert. (2001) *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations.* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Hofstede, Geert. *Cultural Dimensions: Arab World.* http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_arab_world.shtml Accessed 12th July 2010
Lambert, W. "Language as a Factor in Intergroup Relations", in Giles, H and St. Clair, R. *Language and Social Psychology.*

Maamouri, Mohamad. (1998) *Language Education and Human Development: Arabic Diglossia and its Importance to the Quality of Education in the Arab Region.* Philadelphia, PA: The World Bank/International Literacy Institute.

McKeown, J. (2005). *Toward a professional learning community: societal and cultural factors affecting the development of informed professional practice at Turkish Foreign National Schools.* Education doctoral dissertation: Warnborough College, Canterbury, UK. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
Mcniff, J. Lomax, P. and Whitehead, J. (2003) *You and Your Action Research.* (2nd edition) Oxford: Routledge.

Saphier, Jon. and Gower, R. (1997) *The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills.* (5th edition) Carlise, MA: Research for Better Teaching.

Schön, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.* London: Maurice Temple Smith.

Wight, S. (2004) *Language Policy and Language Planning: From nationalism to globalisation.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.