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A Qualitative Analysis of the English Language Teaching Practices of Latter-day Saint Missionaries

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A Qualitative Analysis of the English Language Teaching
Practices of Latter-day Saint Missionaries

Rachel Tui Smith

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Analysis of the English Language Teaching Practices of Latter-day Saint Missionaries

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Master of Arts

This study explores the teaching practices of recently returned Latter-day Saint (LDS) missionaries who voluntarily taught the English language on their full-time missions—serving for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout various parts of the world. The analyses performed in this research offer an insider’s perspective by looking at a large selection of qualitative data gathered directly from these missionaries to provide evidential insight into what those practices are, including the most effective and the most ineffective teaching practices as principally perceived by the missionaries themselves. Thus far, there has been no research reported or data gathered on this topic on the same global scale, and to the same academic level. However, such a study is extremely necessary and beneficial towards refining the focus of the missionary taught English language classes, as well as the quality of teaching that the missionaries provide as they strive to serve and benefit the communities around them.

Keywords: Christian missionaries, ELT, ESL, English language teaching, English teaching missionaries, LDS missionaries, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, volunteer teaching

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Chapter One: Introduction

Thousands of Latter-day Saint (LDS)¹ missionaries around the world teach English as a Second Language (ESL) classes on a volunteer basis.² The general assumption is that they predominantly do so as a service to the communities in which they serve, and/or as a proselytizing tool to help find investigators.³ In most cases, LDS missionaries have little or no professional ESL teaching preparation and receive no guidance on how to best do so. Whilst serving as a full-time LDS missionary, I also taught ESL classes amongst a Spanish-speaking community. In doing so, I noticed many inconsistencies in our teaching efforts and in the quality of our classes. Even when we tried our best to prepare and teach good English lessons, we lacked the linguistic training and pedagogical knowledge that would have allowed us to offer a higher-quality teaching and learning environment. We generally did not have any ESL materials, and on the few occasions that we did get materials, it was usually just a few loose photocopied pages shared by fellow missionaries. There was zero ESL teacher training, and very little direction from leadership. In recognizing this, I knew that there was a need in this area for refinement and improvement. Even as a non-professional, I recognized that the missionaries striving to teach ESL could really benefit from specific leadership direction, pedagogical training, and support.

¹ The term Latter-day Saint(s) or LDS is in reference to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is a Christian religion.

² The term ESL is used in this study more loosely than its original definition; it refers to the general sense of teaching the English language to any non-native speakers, regardless whether or not it is their second language.

³ In the context of this study, an investigator is someone who is interested in the LDS Church, and/or is being taught by the missionaries.

Over the years, a few isolated efforts have been made to provide published ESL materials with an LDS gospel focus (EGP Gospel Principles, 1998; English Language Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), as well as simple materials targeting LDS audiences (Daily Dose Learning Systems, 2012; Probst, 2004), but these have not taken hold nor come to fruition in terms of effective use among the majority of LDS missions. A preliminary step to helping missionaries improve their ESL teaching is to find out what they are currently doing and what their pedagogical needs are. In my study, I surveyed and gathered data from a variety of recently returned LDS missionaries—those who had taught ESL classes while on their missions, and had returned within the last ten years—looking to analyze and find categorical patterns in their teaching practices. I asked a variety of questions via voluntary interviews and surveys that enabled me to more thoroughly understand these teaching practices. Data was gathered from a large selection of responses from over 242 returned missionary participants. The various responses were then carefully coded and organized into clear, cohesive categories. From this analysis coding, patterns and commonalities emerged within the missionaries' ESL teaching practices. Based on conclusions drawn from the analyzed data, it is evident that there are various ways in which the missionaries are striving to teach the English language, but there is no cohesiveness or pedagogical consistency. Consequently, it would be most beneficial if these missionaries could receive some form of professional materials, teacher training, or quality ESL teaching guidance. To this end, it may be of particular interest for persons with linguistic expertise, as well as a deep awareness and empathy for these missionaries and the parameters in which they work and serve, to invest attention towards the provision of realistic, practical assistance for LDS missionaries who teach English.

While the anticipated audience consists of those with an interest in the LDS missionary programs of the world, it is hoped that the content of this study can also add some beneficial context to the many English teaching missionaries in the general Christian domain, especially if, as the well-known Christian linguist Donald Snow emphatically asserts, from a general Christian sense English teaching among missionaries is a legitimate service, irrespective of its Christian influences (Snow, 2001). Although the topic of English teaching Christian missionaries is gathering interest, the quantity of published, empirical data—that which reveals detailed evidence of ESL teaching by missionaries in the mission field⁴—is still relatively scarce. One reason for this silence may be due to the involvement of religious politics (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003) and the heavy taboo (Smith, 2012; Weissman, 2014) often placed on such a subject. In fact, some people label the topic a “thorny issue” (Vandrick, 2009, p. 146), and even in the general realm of ESL teaching there are debates—both casual and formal—deliberating whether or not religion should be mentioned (ESL Lounge, n.d.; Foye, 2014). Nonetheless, there certainly needs to be further examination of the matter, particularly with regards to the current undertakings of ESL teaching in the realm of Christianity (Canagarajah, 2009). This is especially important because, as argued in a study conducted by researching scholars Manka M. Varghese and Bill Johnston,

Evangelical Christians are an enduring and growing presence in the field of English language teaching worldwide and in the TESOL organization in particular. Yet to date, hardly any empirical research has been done on this population of teachers or on the links

⁴ In the context of this study, *mission field* refers to “the geographical area in which a missionary spends the bulk of his or her mission” (Colton, n.d.).

between English teaching, religious beliefs, and missionary work. (Varghese & Johnston, 2007, p. 5)

A better understanding of the depths and raw realities of the ESL teaching situation among missionaries is critical. People on both sides of the debate have noted this. For example, as suggested by linguist Julian Edge (Edge, 2003) and later reaffirmed by Alastair Pennycook and Sophie Coutand-Marin (2003) in reaction to statements by Agnieszka Tennant (2002), for far too long there has been “a massive global silence” about any such connections, “so much so that even promoters of English language missionary work have called for the need for debate” (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 337). Additionally, in his book *English Teaching as Christian Mission: An Applied Theology* Snow points out that, given the number of Christians who work in missions teaching English, it is “surprising that there has not been more discussion within [Christian churches] of this particular form of mission effort” (p. 16). Especially since, “the role of English-teacher-as-missionary” (p. 16) can raise several questions such as, how do missionaries focus their time and attention, if they are striving to balance their Christian duties with linguistic instruction (Snow, 2001).

Thus, the focus of this study is directly connected to the need for greater understanding and open discussion in this misunderstood and arguably underdeveloped area of English language teaching. In order to conduct this study, I needed to gather qualitative information from people who would have relatively current insight concerning the English language-teaching situation in the LDS mission fields of the world, and analyze their responses. The ensuing chapters of this study will explore the specifics of the process. Chapter two reviews some professional literature that has relevance to this particular study, helping to shape a more solid contextualized background for the reader. The subsequent chapters, three to five, include a

detailed explanation of the methodology used in conducting this study, an in-depth analysis of the gathered data, and some discussion on the findings and results of that analysis. The final chapter draws evidenced conclusions, includes recognized limitations of this study, and provides some clear suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter references existing publications that contain valuable information and insightful viewpoints relevant to the study of ESL teaching practices of LDS missionaries. A review of literature apropos to the history of Christian missionary ESL teaching provides necessary background and contextualization of this study. A relatedly succinct overview of basic LDS teachings with regard to missionary work and purpose will likewise add to the framework of understanding. Also discussed is the current state of ESL teaching among LDS missionaries, with brief probing into the ethical debate as to whether or not these missionaries should use ESL teaching primarily as a proselytizing tool. Ultimately, the main research questions for this study are presented.

Christian Missionary ESL Teaching

Historical investigation will reveal a long-standing relationship between English teaching and Christian missionary work (Snow, 2001). During the beginning of the 20th century, English language instruction was considered “widespread in mission-sponsored educational institutions” (as cited in Snow, 2001, p. 15) across various parts of the world. A number of TESOL professionals (e.g., Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003) have criticized these practices as being unprofessional and even unethical. Others (Dormer, 2011; Purgason K. B., 2004; Snow, 2001; Wong, 2004) have defended the combination of language teaching and Christian service as favorable, so long as it is done properly. Following are some additional arguments detailing the specifics regarding both sides of the issue.

In her book, *Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity* (2011), Christian, ESL scholar and TESOL⁵ enthusiast Jan Edwards Dormer made some insightfully relevant arguments with regard to the need for quality English language teachers amongst the general Christian missionary population:

Christians believe that the Bible is the revealed truth about God, and that it is for all people, everywhere. We certainly must hold tightly to this belief, for without it there is no gospel. And the opportunities for Christians to teach English in all parts of the globe are tremendous. But we must tread very carefully as we represent Christ in and through English classes. Pennycook and Coutand-Martin (2003) have said, “Once ELT [English Language Teaching] becomes constructed in itself as a form of Christian service, it is also too easy for the promotion of ELT to be driven by missionary fervor rather than educational need” (p. 348). Has this happened? Do we sometimes now teach English in missions simply because it has become a form of missionary service, without seeing its possible negative consequences? Or are we actively looking at our ministries and ensuring that they are not harmful but helpful in every possible way? (p. 23)

Nonetheless, well-known critics of this particular field—Pennycook and Coutand-Marin—have brought to light some particularly important considerations that need to be both acknowledged and addressed when looking at refining the English teaching practices used by Christian missionaries, or, as Pennycook and Coutand-Marin call it, TEML (teaching English as

⁵ Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

a missionary language). In their article “Teaching English as a Missionary Language,” these are grouped into four main categories:

1. The scale of this work: we have located dozens of websites concerned with TEML.
2. The cultural politics that accompany much of this teaching: while all pedagogy implies a politics, there are particular relationships between TEML and global politics.
3. The issue of trust and disclosure: a central strategy is to gain access to students through ELT and then to use this relationship to spread the Christian message.
4. The way in which TEML implicitly supports the global spread of English over other possibilities. (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 338)

Similar concerns to these also plague the current English language teaching practices of LDS missionaries. They are striving to teach the English language, yet conceivably also struggle to decide upon the best way to go about doing so, without jeopardizing their focus as full-time missionaries. It is important to deliberate on the sundry intricacies of this particular sector of the English language teaching realm, because, “unless we engage in debate over the various moral projects tied up with English language teaching, we argue, educators will be unable to establish the grounds for our choices between missionary, liberal or critical projects” (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 337). In light of this, the desire to deconstruct the concerns, and to rebuild adequate solutions is yet another reason that implores a need for deeper analysis on the current teaching practices of these missionaries. If enough observable data can be gathered, it can provide a foundational opportunity to solidly analyze and deconstruct potential answers and responses to the queries posed in those four areas of concern.

LDS Missionary Work—A Basic Understanding

Demographics and parameters. The demographics of LDS missionaries and the parameters of their missionary work are fairly unusual when compared with other Christian missionaries. Although LDS missionaries have been teaching ESL for a long time, for example, in Germany in 1924 (Julian, 2014) and in Palestine in 1841 (Hunt, 2003), that teaching was relatively small and on a measurably different scale when compared to what is happening today. Today, the prospect of missionary service takes on various forms within the LDS Church, for example, missions for retired senior couples (Full-Time Senior Missionaries, 2015), humanitarian oriented service (Humanitarian Programs, 2015), and online missionary work (Sharing the Gospel Online, 2015).

However, in acknowledging the existence of various forms of LDS missionary work, the largest, and arguably the most distinctively known is that of young, full-time proselytizing missionaries. This vast majority of LDS missionaries are single adults who generally begin their missionary service between the ages of 18 and 21 (Monson, 2012; About The MTC, n.d.), and serve for what is considered to be full-time missionary service for a period of eighteen months to two years. These missionaries voluntarily “put aside school, work and dating for about two years in order to serve the Lord at their own expense” (Who are the Missionaries?, 2015). The process to becoming a full-time missionary is very structured. Prospective full-time missionaries submit applications to LDS Church headquarters and wait to receive a call “to a specific mission around the world” (What Missionaries Do, 2015, para. 1). Once the call is issued and accepted, missionaries spend “a few weeks in a training center where some of them learn a new language and all of them rigorously study and practice teaching the gospel” (What Missionaries Do, 2015, para. 1). They then set off to their assigned mission locations and begin their service.

Missionaries' lives are completely dedicated to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ” (What Missionaries Do, 2015, para. 1). A typical day for a full-time LDS missionary might look like the following:

waking up at 6:30 a.m., studying the scriptures, and meeting new people to share the gospel with. The afternoon might include discussing gospel lessons with people they meet and volunteering for service in the community. A good night has them teaching the gospel to interested individuals and helping them learn and keep God's commandments or attending a baptismal service for someone who's decided to join the Church. They return home around 9:30 p.m. and fall into bed, usually exhausted and happy. (What Missionaries Do, 2015, para. 2)

It should be noted that the scope of this current study is only focused on gathering data referencing the experiences of young, full-time missionaries.

Is there a place for ESL teaching? What place does ESL teaching have among LDS missionaries? A fundamental question for any LDS missionary to ask is, “What is my purpose as a missionary?” And a core answer can be found in the basic missionary manual *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004): The purpose of a full-time missionary is to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.” (p. 1). Additionally, in the teachings of President David O. McKay, former

prophet of the Church⁶, it is stated that the “mission of the Church is to prepare the way for the final establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Its purpose is, first, to develop in men’s lives Christ-like attributes; and, second, to transform society so that the world may be a better and more peaceful place in which to live” (McKay, 2011, p. 22).

How does this overall gospel teaching focus of missionaries fit in comparison with the sub-focus of teaching ESL, and why do some missionaries involve themselves in ESL teaching at all? If missionary work is truly considered the “lifeblood of the Church and the lifesaving blessing to all who accept its message” (Rasband, 2010, p. 51), then certainly understanding the specifics of what missionaries do while working in the mission field is of utmost importance. This is a root enquiry to consider when contemplating the investigation of such ESL practices.

LDS Missionary ESL Teaching

Postulations of the current situation. The current state of ESL teaching among LDS missionaries seems arbitrary and unsystematic when considered from a generalized view. There appears to be very little indication of consistent standards when it comes to how or what the missionaries teach in their English language classes. For example, as evidenced in the research results of this study, some missions of the world have had large, regularly held English classes, providing these free educational services to their local communities multiple times per week. Other missions may have one or two classes per month, with a wide-ranging influx of students.

⁶ Throughout this study, when either the term *LDS Church* or *church* is used (with or without capitalization), it is in reference to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is a Christian religion.

Yet other missions have no established classes at all, but may offer a singular, specifically requested English lesson to a particular investigator.

Both the lack of coherence and the lack of well-documented teaching practices demonstrate the need for a general survey and analysis of current teaching conditions among LDS missions worldwide, especially with the intended purpose of utilizing the gathered data to improve the ESL teaching conditions. Prior to this study and to my knowledge, no such analysis had been attempted.

Mission specific evidences of improved ESL missionary teaching. There are evidences of a few mission specific efforts recently put forth to provide some sort of systematic ESL program, materials, and/or training. A deeper understanding of the specifics of these may help in providing clues regarding what direction a worldwide mission analysis should point. The Mongolia Ulaanbaatar mission is one example of an individual mission that has strived to provide coherent, quality ESL materials and TESOL training to the missionaries prior to their being sent to teach. Currently under the direction of mission president Joseph P. Benson (Church News, 2013; LDS Missions, 2015), this mission has missionaries who chiefly concentrate on teaching the English language as a freely offered service to the people in Mongolia. The main reason given for this is that proselytizing by foreign missionaries is currently prohibited in Mongolia (MormonWiki, 2013; Stewart, 2013). Thus, service through English language teaching is one of the only avenues through which the LDS Church may bring foreign missionaries into the country, and is something they have been doing for over 20 years. In fact, according to Pennycook & Makoni (2005) this arrangement seems to be common in a number of countries that generally do not grant visas to Christian missionaries; instead these missionaries apply for alternative visas “under the title of English teachers” (p. 142). Although foreign missionaries in

Mongolia cannot proselytize on the street, they can answer gospel-related questions when asked. This often happens through the context of ESL classes. They spend a great deal of time teaching English classes in various locations, such as schools and local businesses (Stewart, 2013). It is to this end that the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar mission puts forth specific effort to support the provision of quality ESL teaching by its missionaries.

Another example is the Thailand Bangkok mission. While under the direction of President Scott F. Hansen (Church News, 2003) between the years 2003 to 2006 (Haslam, n.d.), this mission created and implemented specific ESL teaching manuals to be used in assisting the missionaries with their ESL teaching while on the mission (Thailand Bangkok Mission, n.d.). Those materials included a basic manual (i.e. designed for beginner level proficiency learners), an advanced manual (i.e. designed for intermediate and advanced proficiency learners), and a teacher's manual (Thailand Bangkok Mission, n.d.), complete with lesson schedule, procedural guidelines, and activity ideas. All of this was created in order to help the missionaries find some harmonious congruency and more effective solidarity in their efforts to teach English classes, with the intent of eventually being able to share the gospel message with learners (Hansen, n.d.).

As the aforementioned examples illustrate, a select few LDS missions are, of their own accord, striving to provide quality, consistent, ESL teaching helps, and to meet the demand in accordance with recognized needs. Nonetheless, these are mission specific attempts, and they still appear to be fairly few and far between. On the whole, not many attempts have been made to follow suit by the majority of missions, although many of those missions still have missionaries attempting to teach ESL classes.

It is quite possible that the specific efforts to refine the ESL teaching efforts of missionaries have had positive impact on the overall missionary success. Comments such as,

“the Church is growing rapidly in Thailand because of the tremendous efforts of missionaries” (Fritchen, 2015) and “the Church has been born in a day in Mongolia” (Holland, 2011) provide encouraging affirmation that the presence of missionary work is, in a gospel-spreading sense, proving to be rapidly successful. These observations raise the question: Could these missionary successes have any relation to their specific ESL teaching efforts?

Using ESL Teaching As A Proselytizing Tool

With regard to ESL teaching missionaries, there appear to be two distinctive mindsets as to what the core intent of these missionaries should be. One general viewpoint is that, if missionaries are teaching English language classes, then they should focus solely on the English. The other general viewpoint is that ESL teaching can be an effective proselytizing tool, and missionaries should be encouraged to utilize it as such. The following sub-sections provide further exploration into the depths of these two contradicting views.

ESL teaching should *not* primarily be a proselytizing tool. There is much concern that the use of English language teaching is being speciously used as a means “to convert the unsuspecting English language learner” (Pennycook & Makoni, 2005, p. 139). This raises “profound moral and political questions” (Pennycook & Makoni, 2005, p. 139) regarding what is really taking place in English classrooms across the globe. Christian scholar Myrrl Byler (2009) states that “a truly Christ-like presence among language students will *not* focus on targeting and strategizing for conversion, but rather be concerned with the needs of the students” (p. 128, emphasis added).

Consistent with this viewpoint, Christian missionaries should put aside any thoughts of proselytizing or conversion while they are teaching ESL; anything that would insinuate that their

main focus is not the English language, but rather to teach and spread their religion (Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). After all, if students are coming to the missionaries to learn English, then they are *only* there to learn English, and should be obliged in such. ESL students are not there to be baptized or converted to the religion, and they should not feel any pressure to do so. Nor should they be subjected to religious studies. Various scholars (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005) have alluded to this mindset. One example in particular comes from professor and researching scholar Paul Wicking (2014). In his study on comparing faith and pedagogy, Wicking reports that many people often see it as “an abuse of trust to preach the gospel to students who come to class expecting to be taught English and not to be proselytized” (p. 45). The general consensus is that missionaries should instead focus on the more academic and pedagogical side of language teaching, because that is what the students are there to learn, and that is what the students expect.

ESL teaching *should* primarily be a proselytizing tool. Missionaries are missionaries, and we on the whole need to respect that. Using the main missionary purpose (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004) as a guide, it is important to acknowledge, respect and support the fact that they are first and foremost, missionaries. As referenced by Wicking (2014), numerous scholars (Dewey, 1909; Noddings, 2005; Tom, 1984) have reasoned that the educator is inevitably a moral agent; therefore, any decisions and actions made under their jurisdiction in the language classroom are unavoidably value-laden. In essence, it is both improbable and impractical to expect that missionaries will not act like missionaries, simply because they are teaching the English language. If we desire to help improve the ESL missionary teaching scene, then we should be mindfully considerate of the fact that missionary work is indeed the main focus for missionaries, and it can be woven into their curriculum of English language teaching.

An interesting perspective offered through an overview of comparative studies compiled by researcher Suresh Canagarajah (2009), indicates there are many people who think that antagonists towards the notion that ESL teaching be used as a missionary proselytization tool are exaggerating their concerns. Ironically, he asserts that this reaction “against the narrowness of modernist assumptions” has actually created more openness “for moral and spiritual considerations” (p. 4). This indicates that the opposing views have essentially proven beneficial in the sense that they have contributed towards a more resounding resolve to understand how and why missionaries use ESL teaching as a proselytizing tool, and to accept or embrace it. Rather than seek argumentation, we too might benefit from supporting this ideal and demonstrating that missionary work can be tied nicely with quality language teaching.

Furthermore, there is a lot of support from scripture reiterating the importance of using one’s given talents and abilities to benefit God’s purposes, and the importance of preaching the gospel through various means. Wicking (2014) reiterates this point; “there is much encouragement from scripture to evangelize those who do not yet know God by proclaiming the gospel message” (p. 45).

In the *Thailand Bangkok Mission: Teacher’s Manual*, President Scott F. Hansen, speaking at the time from his position as mission president, specifically stated the following:

I assure you that as we whole-heartedly support and implement this English program, there will be a great harvest of souls. There are many souls ready to hear the truth and English Class will help invite those people to come into the doors of the church. Do not consider English Class an obligation, but as an effective finding tool and a way to bless and enhance your work. (Hansen, n.d.)

The answer seems affirmatively clear if we acknowledge veracity in the sentiments of President Hansen. Latter-day Saints generally sustain the fact that leaders called in the LDS Church are called of God, and, thus can give inspired counsel and direction as leaders.

From the vantage point of his calling as mission president, Hansen further clarifies that English classes should indeed be delivered with a clear, gospel sharing purpose in mind:

You may succeed in conducting a fun, entertaining English lesson, but if every student is not invited to learn more about the Restored gospel, you have failed in your calling as a missionary. Design your English classes with that purpose in mind. Through well-organized, professional, and spiritually-guided English classes, students will be prepared to accept an invitation to investigate the Church. We are hopeful that in return for providing a professional English program, many souls will open their eyes and ears to the gospel and come unto baptism. (Hansen, n.d.)

Given that this is only one man's remarks, and that his jurisdiction of authoritative voice on the matter may only stretch to the extent of his calling at the time of mission president, it would be wise to remember, that thus far this can be seen as only an opinion, and there will be contrary opinions. Nonetheless, these are clearly some very strong statements that indeed support the vital place that gospel teaching has inside the ESL classroom.

Furthermore, consistent with the notion that religious teachings do have a valid, even vital role in the ESL classroom, Canagarajah (2009) points out that many people are both willing and able to look beyond the physical, pedagogically obvious state of material learning in pursuit of a deeper, more spiritual understanding of the world. In other words, there are people who *want* to learn more about Christianity, or, to elaborate more specifically to this study, the LDS

doctrines and teachings. “Some are even accommodating such factors as hope, faith, and belief to explain human behavior in current interdisciplinary research” (p. 5). They are enriched when a healthy marriage between the scholastic and the spiritual can be reached.

Moving forward. As hitherto noted, there are different, even opposing mindsets regarding the dilemma of *how*, *why*, and with *what attitude* missionaries should go about teaching the ESL classes; how they can offer meaningful and relevant classes without hidden agendas, yet also without constricting their important gospel focus. Especially since, as eluded to by critic Stephanie Vandrick while citing Mary Shepard Wong, the “Western ideal of strict separation between religion and secular life is not the ideal in many parts of the world” (Vandrick, 2009, p. 146) and there should certainly be place for the acknowledgement and discussion of spiritual matters in the English language classroom (Wong, 2009). It is my hope that through the information gathered and sorted in this thesis research, that beneficial insights and ideas as to how to best address the missionary ESL teaching situation can be observed and analyzed on a deeper level, and perhaps some harmonious congruency obtained in terms of how to best move forward in this area of concern among LDS missionaries in particular.

The importance of avoiding misrepresentation. In her book *Teaching English in Missions; Effectiveness and Integrity*, Jan Edwards Dormer points out that more harm than good may actually come if and when the gospel is misrepresented, which is something that could happen if English language teaching missionaries confuse what is cultural and political with what is Christian (2011, p. 20). In a sense, they may not know how to teach purely language without tying in Christian—or in more specific terms to this research, LDS religion—into the classes. This may be especially true in countries where the LDS faith is very different to the general political, economic, and religious systems practiced there. Thus, it is important to

determine whether or not such a connection between gospel emphasis and language acquisition is truly valuable and beneficial, especially if we do not wish to detract from the central focus of LDS missionaries, which is to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end” (Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service, 2004, p. 1).

It is imperative that missionaries strive to avoid misrepresentation, where at all possible. Doing so can help build stronger trust and relationships between the missionaries and the students, the investigators, and/or the communities in which missionaries serve and teach. As one scholar noted, (Vandrick, 2009) there is indeed great praise to be had for those missionaries who are honest in their purposes. By presenting a clear, observable analysis of the current ESL teaching practices among LDS missionaries, we are able to see where the missionaries’ emphases lie, and what they believe they *should* be focusing on when they teach. This knowledge can assist in the avoidance of misrepresentation in ESL teaching by missionaries. Understanding the intent behind what the missionaries’ roles are, and what the students should expect, can greatly enhance the perceived and received quality in the language classes. That is, missionaries will not be so concerned about wondering if they are wasting the Lord’s time, or their own missionary time, and students will not be concerned about walking into a perceived conversion trap, if they were told to expect something completely different.

Motivation: a necessary ingredient for ESL teaching success. In the book, *Language Curriculum Design* (Nation & Macalister, 2010), we are reminded of the important role that motivation plays in the language teaching and learning process. As much as is possible, language

learners should be excited and interested in the language that they are learning, and should be able to value this learning opportunity:

Motivation is a very important determinant of the amount of time, involvement and effect that learners give to learning. The best motivation is “intrinsic”, springing from within the learner, rather than “extrinsic”, coming from some outside integrative or instrumental reward. Intrinsic motivation can develop as a result of extrinsic motivation. Learning for reasons of gain can result in a genuine love of learning and involvement in the activity.

(p. 50)

This lends itself to the notion that motivation is indeed a vital part of language learning, and that much of the motivation can come from the learners themselves. In an empirical study, linguistic motivation experts Zoltán Dörnyei and Kata Csizér indicate that “without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 203). Thus, it would be beneficial for LDS missionaries who engage in ESL teaching efforts to have some understanding and pedagogical ability to perceive and build upon positive learner motivation. This is particularly important if, as Dörnyei and Csizér claim, high motivation “can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one’s language aptitude and learning condition” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 204). Obviously volunteer missionaries are not professional experts when it comes to ESL teaching. However, with proper support or guidance, they can be trained to understand the basic principles of language-learner motivation, and thus find ways to successfully utilize this powerful tool to improve the efficiency of their ESL classes.

Another reason that motivation is an important factor to understand, particularly for volunteer missionaries striving to teach ESL, is due to its strong connection with classroom

goals. As Dörnyei points out, for most teachers the “real motivational issue” is being able to “find ways to encourage their students to accept the goals of the given classroom activities, regardless of whether or not the students enjoy these activities or would choose to engage in them if other alternatives were available” (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 51). Thus, if the intents and purposes for missionaries offering the ESL classes are not clear, either for themselves as the teachers *or* for their students, then there can be substantial problems with motivation which will, in turn, cause problems with effective teaching and learning. Consequently, an assessment on what these core goals and objectives are would be most beneficial.

The need for congruency in expectations both *from* and *for* missionaries. In his book *More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad*, author, linguist, and TESOL educator Don Snow makes some very valuable points for consideration by volunteer English language teachers. “The role of a language teacher is not simply to be a transmitter of knowledge; like a coach, a language teacher needs to assist students in understanding the task before them, staying motivated, building discipline, and learning how to pursue the task on their own” (Snow, 1996, p. 11). It may be argued that currently, it is very difficult for the LDS missionaries to do all that Snow mentions in a congruent and effective manner, especially because they are not trained ESL professionals, and generally do not have the language teaching skills necessary to ensure fluidity in all of those aforementioned areas. Snow goes further to explain that any assumptions with regard to the principles of language learning, and the role of the teacher in this, “may not be shared by students or colleagues in your host country, so it is important to make your assumptions explicit to your students and to make sure that your expectations and your students are not too far apart” (Snow, 1996, p. 11). With regard to LDS missionaries and the English language classes that they teach—or attempt to teach—this would

suggest that it is important that a clear understanding be reached between both the missionaries in their role as language teacher, and their students.

The need for coherence and organization. In discussing the development of programs and materials for language learning, linguistic researchers Fraida Dubin and Elite Olshtain point out that, while there may not be a one-size-fits-all curriculum for a particular target audience (which in this case involves the LDS missionary English classes), nonetheless, if there is a clear need for added structure and uniformity, it should be attempted (Dubin & Olshtain, 1990). In many regards, this current thesis is a pioneering study; it is the first of its kind on the theme of a global focused analysis of LDS missionary ESL teaching practices. To date, there is no global uniformity in curriculum or syllabus or teaching materials used by LDS missionaries. Thus, as a broad qualitative statement, it appears that many missionaries are left to fend for themselves in teaching ESL, and they do not have coherent, organized ESL teaching aids.

Dubin and Olshtain further point out that, in teaching English to non-native speakers, “two major aspects need to be considered: the role of English as a means for furthering one’s education, and the effectiveness of the existing curriculum and teaching materials” (Dubin & Olshtain, 1990, p. 9). This viewpoint helps illustrate that there is a clear need for a well-defined link between the target audience and the syllabus and/or curriculum created for them.

It is the aim of this research to provide enough quantifiable data that will provide a platform for improved understanding what is currently happening in the field, and upon which the foundational steps may be built towards a more cohesive and meaningful program and materials for the LDS missionaries. This need for uniformity, as defined by Dubin and Olshtain, should be acknowledged and addressed with regard to the scope of this current study. Thus, an initial step towards better structure and effectiveness in the ESL teaching necessitates an

analytical look into the actual ESL teaching habits and practices of LDS missionaries, in essence, a qualitative needs-assessment.

Main Research Questions

Ultimately, the goal of this thesis is to analytically address the following questions: (1) What are the current ESL teaching habits and practices of LDS missionaries?; (2) What do these practices indicate about the general qualitative state of English language teaching among LDS missionaries globally?; and (3) What can we learn from these findings that can provide beneficial refinement going forward?

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methods employed in this study, particularly in relation to the main research questions. Contained within is a chronological articulation of the various procedures conducted for this research, organized into sub-sections. First is a briefing on some initial organization steps. Following that comes an explanation of the data gathering stages—stage one (in-person and phone interviews) and stage two (online surveys) processes. Included within the aforementioned stages is a demographic description of the participants involved in each stage.

Initial Organizational Steps—Deciding on instruments

An initial step in the methodology process was to choose the appropriate type of instruments to use for gathering data. Given the fact that there is a need for assessment, and given the fact that needs analysis can be an excellent approach to “examining target situations” (Benesch, 1996, p. 723), it was important to choose my assessment instrument wisely. Because obtaining qualitative information was necessary for the scope of this study, the two main possibilities were either observations or surveys. Following is a brief discussion into the characterization of each possibility, as well as the reasons why surveys were the ultimate instrument choice for this current study.

Observations. Observational research is common in both second language learning and second language teaching, and is known to be extremely useful for gathering in-depth information with regards to a particular field of focus. “Observations can allow the study of a behavior at close range with many important contextual variables present” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 187). Several other publications (Bailey, 2006; Marshall & Young, 2009; Wajnryb,

2013) allude to similar benefits of using observations in the analysis of various teaching situations. In light of this, it would certainly seem expedient to seek observational data with regard to this current study.

However, due to the wide ranging scope and nature of the study, mass amounts of in-person observations—i.e. physically going from mission to mission in order to observe the LDS missionaries teaching ESL—would be extremely impractical. Still, distributing surveys designed to observe in written form the thoughts, ideas, and feedback of target participants (regarding specific research questions), would be a viable option. Such information is extremely beneficial in attempting to understand the *why* behind what missionaries are currently doing when they teach English language classes. Furthermore, it is extremely important to gain primary thoughts and insight from the missionaries themselves, those who have taught firsthand, because, as confirmed by Mackey and Gass, it is the teachers themselves who bring an added “wealth of background knowledge and experience to the research process, offering a unique perspective on the dynamics of second language learning and teaching” (Mackey & Gass, 2008, p. 216).

Surveys. As previously indicated, an integral step towards learning accurate information regarding the current state of ESL teaching among missionaries is to gather firsthand attestations from primary sources. An excellent way to do this—especially when seeking a large number of respondents—is through questionnaire surveys. In *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (2008), Mackey and Gass note the benefits of utilizing questionnaires to gather necessary information. In addition to being “more economical and practical than individual interviews” questionnaires can often elicit “longitudinal information from learners in a short period of time” (p. 95). Furthermore, surveys and questionnaires provide opportunity to “elicit comparable information from a number of respondents” (p. 95). Additionally, because of the

flexibility they provide in terms of distribution, they allow the researcher “a greater degree of flexibility in the data gathering process” and depending on how the questionnaires are structured, they can provide “both qualitative insights and quantifiable data, and thus are flexible enough to be used in a range of research” (p. 96). Since qualitative insights were necessary for the development and goals of this current study, the use of surveys to gather data was extremely valuable.

Initial Organizational Steps—IRB

The necessary, preliminary steps also included submitting the initial research plan for IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. This included writing a skeletal thesis with thorough detail explanation on the various components of my research. It also included an analysis, full disclosure regarding any subject participation, and a briefing on how the gathered data would be used. Once the IRB submission was approved, I moved forward with the two stages of interviewing and surveying to gather useful and relevant data.

Stage One—In-person and Phone Interviews

My data collection was divided into two stages. The first stage included detailed one-on-one interviews—on the phone and in person—with ten different recently returned LDS missionaries. I asked a variety of questions with regard to their experiences voluntarily teaching the English language on their missions. These initial interviews were critical in helping to shape the trajectory of stage two; a similarly focused, yet mass-distributed, online survey.

Participants. Nine out of the ten participants interviewed in this stage returned from their missions within the last five years, and one returned approximately ten years ago. All were volunteer participants in this interview process. I located them through connections in the BYU⁷ Department of Linguistics and English Language, and through word of mouth amongst various returned missionary acquaintances. All participants were Americans (i.e. from the United States of America) that had served missions in different locations around the world. In no particular order, those missions included: Frankfurt, Germany; Monterrey, Mexico; Adriatic North and South; Concepcion, Chile; Bangkok, Thailand; Fukuoka, Japan; Cleveland Ohio, USA; Long Beach California, USA; Moscow, Russia; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participants were interviewed either in-person or via direct telephone communication, and asked a series of questions about their experience and their thoughts on the English classes that they taught while on their missions.

Interview process. It was anticipated that the interviews would take between 20 minutes to half an hour, but in reality they took closer to 40 minutes. This was mainly due to the fact that participants on the whole offered well-explained details, which took a longer than estimated amount of time to communicate. By asking a variety of generalized questions in stage one, I was able to concentrate on common responses and gain a more refined idea of which questions bring about the most meaningful and relevant responses.

Following is a sample list of some of the questions that I asked during the stage one interviews. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix A.

⁷ Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Where did you serve your full-time LDS mission?

How often did you teach ESL (i.e. the English language)?

What was the size of classes? (Was there a lot of variance? Was there a common average?)

What materials did you use?

Did you implement LDS gospel teaching/missionary focused material?

Were you highly supported from mission presidency, headquarters, etc.? (or, were the English classes initiated by you as missionary companions only)?

What was effective, what worked, and what didn't work?

Figure 1. Sample list of questions used in stage one, interviews.

It was initially presumed that some of the questions asked in stage one might prove irrelevant or nonessential to the overall focus for this study. However, upon receiving the various responses, it was actually found that all questions in this stage provided meaningful feedback that could be used to draw insightful analyses beneficial to this study. Thus, for the most part, the questions used in stage one were similarly used in stage two, albeit with a couple of different questions added, as well as variance in sentence structure and word choice.

Stage Two—Qualtrics Surveys

A primary purpose for the initial stage was to help set the parameters for what would be the most relevant and meaningful questions to ask in this successive stage. In a sense, stage one

was appreciably a trial run precedent to stage two, which would be conducted on a much larger scale.

Distribution. Various attempts were made to ensure a diverse distribution of the survey. An anonymous and freely accessible Qualtrics link was created and shared via email with professors and secretaries of several BYU language departments⁸. Those departments in turn forwarded the survey link on to their students—many of who were recently returned missionaries that had taught English language classes on their missions. I also posted the survey link on the main page of ten different social media YSA⁹ groups, based in the general region of Utah County. Participants were correspondingly invited to forward and share the survey link with friends and acquaintances that also fit into the specified subject category. This contributed to the anonymity because there was no way of knowing where each participant was based, or from where he or she originated.

Qualtrics surveys. The mass-distributed survey was conducted online and consisted of 20 questions. The majority of these were open-ended questions in order to allow participants to respond freely. Since, in many respects, this was a pioneering study, I didn't know what to expect in terms of responses, and I did not wish to restrict the answers in anyway. A few of the questions were multiple-choice because the scale of options was clear. For example, when asked how supported they felt in their ESL teaching efforts, participants were given a five-option scale,

⁸ I.e. Department of Spanish & Portuguese, Department of French and Italian, Department of German and Russian, Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages, and Center for Language Studies.

⁹ An abbreviation for Young Single Adults, in this case, particularly people ages 18-31 in the LDS Church.

ranging from not supported at all, to very strongly supported. As previously indicated, these survey questions were predominantly based upon the questions asked in stage one as they had proven beneficial to this research focus. The following is a sample list of some of the survey questions that were asked. The complete list can be found in Appendix B.

As a missionary, how often did you teach ESL? (Note: ESL is an abbreviation for English as a Second Language, or in other words, English language classes.)

What was the average size of your classes (i.e. how many students attended)?

Where did you teach the English classes? (e.g. LDS Churches, member homes, local town halls, etc.)

What was the main purpose for your ESL teaching?

Did you find ESL teaching effective to your purpose? Why/why not?

Figure 2. Sample list of questions used in stage two, online surveys.

The survey was actively open for two and a half months. It was closed after the recorded response rate proved to have considerably declined. This initially happened after roughly two months, at which point 239 completed responses had been recorded. However, in hopes that the overall number of recorded responses might rise to an even 250, the survey continued to remain open for a further two weeks. Parenthetically, the only reason for this desire to hit 250 responses was for the incidental simplicity it could provide in terms of statistical analysis and percentage divisions, etc. Nonetheless, after the additional two-week period, only an additional three responses were received. Thus, the final number of respondents came to 242.

Participants. All participants in this stage were volunteers. Focus was intentionally given to participants who had returned from their missions within the last ten years for three reasons: one, because this would provide a fairly representative overview of the current ESL teaching situation among missionaries, and two, because it was neither realistic nor practical to gather data from missionaries serving missions at the time of this study. Thirdly, due to the nature of the convenience sampling (primarily invited university students and YSA participants), and the distribution methods employed, missionaries who had served over ten years ago were not as easily accessible or readily available for surveying. At the outset, it was impossible to predict the exact number of people who would participate. Nonetheless, it was originally anticipated that between 50 and 300 voluntary subjects would complete the survey. In actuality, the recorded response tally indicated that 364 people had participated. However only 242 of those results were useful and provided relevant information serviceable to this study. This is essentially due to the fact that the other 122 participants did not finish the survey, i.e. did not click the submit button. Regardless of how many questions participants actually completed, if they did not click the submit button, any potential responses from them were received as blank. It is unclear as to whether this was due to technicalities of the Qualtrics design, or if the missing 122 surveys were indeed left blank by those participants. In this regard, it is impossible to know whether or not those partial-participants had actually provided meaningful responses.

It is assumed that most participants currently live in Utah County or Salt Lake County, because the surveys were initially distributed among people living in these areas. For the first couple of days the influx of responses was particularly slow. Afterwards, however, this response rate accelerated, with various spikes in the regularity of incoming responses. I was able to loosely monitor the ebb and flow of this frequency by monitoring the Qualtrics response tally.



Figure 3. Screenshot of the Qualtrics response tally that provides an overall accounting of the traffic flow to the survey; indicator of number of responses recorded.

Analysis categorization. The data received from the survey were organized by each corresponding question, and categorized into groups representing the responses. Due to the qualitative nature of the survey, and the variance in responses, it was not possible to specify every single detail that was provided in the surveys. However, data was organized into groups that best represented the general gist of what respondents were saying. Furthermore, in order to help maintain trustworthiness with regards to accuracy in this categorization, the groups were divided with the assistance of an arbitrarily selected fellow researcher. In other words, all responses were divided into their groups according to the discernment of two people, not just one, to help add accuracy in the data sorting process.

Chapter Four: Analysis

This chapter presents categorized results of the qualitative findings in the data received from various participants. Specific mention is given for any significant or commonly emerging patterns in the responses. Though the study was conducted in two stages, (stage one being the individual interviews, and stage two being the mass-distributed surveys) the numerical data presented in this chapter represent responses received in stage two only, essentially because the interviews were considered preliminary to the main results received in the mass-distributed surveys.

To ensure trustworthiness in data organization, a team of two people, an assistant research analyst and myself, categorized the analyses performed in this section. This assistant was selected due to her willingness to help, her educational background, and her unique capacity for logistical thinking and organization. One team member would propose specific categories, and the other person would provide confirmation of agreement with those categories. The only exceptions were with *Figure 4* versus *Figure 5*, and *Figure 7* versus *Figure 8*; it was agreed that those categories should be organized separately because each of us had varying perspectives regarding how to categorize these results, yet all perspectives provided beneficial insight.

Essential to note, although this analysis is based on an overall pool of 242 responding participants, not all participants provided responses to every question. Since the survey was intentionally anonymous and participants were allowed to bypass any questions that they did not wish to answer, some numbers do not always add to the total 242 in the calculated data and the tables and charts. Nonexistent responses were purposely excluded from the calculation of figures so as not to disrupt or misrepresent the actual received data. Thus, the total percentage on any percentage-based calculations is representative of only actual responses to each corresponding

question. This was done in order to help ensure that category portions are equitably represented according to actual responses received.

In sum, this analysis is divided by individual question, with each section organized to include a written analysis and corresponding tables or figures, and are labeled into the following categories:

- 1. Frequency of Teaching English Language Classes*
- 2. Geographical Mission Location of Participants*
- 3. Timeframe of Participants' Missionary Service*
- 4. Missionaries' Intended Purpose(s) for Offering English Language Classes*
- 5. Perceived Effectiveness of the ESL Classes Towards Intended Purpose(s)*
- 6. Primary Initiators of the English Language Classes in the Mission Field*
- 7. Average Number of Students Attending the English Classes*
- 8. Meeting-place Location of the English Language Classes*
- 9. Materials Commonly Used to Assist with the English Classes*
- 10. Perceived Support that Missionaries Received*
- 11. Perceived Positive or Negative Experience, and Why*

1. Frequency of Teaching English Language Classes

Participants were asked to indicate how often they taught their ESL classes. Although asked as an open-response question, for the sake of simplicity, analysis one shows the responses

categorized into three main groups: participants who taught once per week, participants who taught less than once per week, and participants who taught more than once per week. Analysis two is a more specific breakdown of each of the categories, with the various specified ESL teaching timespans.

Analysis one. The majority of respondents, 153 out of the 242, indicated that they taught once per week, either consistently, or for a certain period of time during their missions. At 64%, that is over half the respondent population. Within that group there were those who also indicated disparity in this weekly frequency. For example, some stated that they taught one or two times per week. Others specified that the weekly teaching was only consistent for a certain portion of their mission. However, in the interest of congruity, I have included in this category all those who indicated any amount of weekly teaching as their most common frequency.

A further 65 participants, or 27% of the total respondents, indicated that they primarily taught ESL classes less than once per week, with the most common response being monthly or bi-monthly in certain mission areas only. The final 23 respondents, or 9%, indicated that they generally taught more than once per week, with the average being two classes per week. As with the first group, within these final groups are those who taught more than once a week on a consistent basis throughout their entire mission, as well as those who did so only for a portion of their missions, for example, for a three-month period.

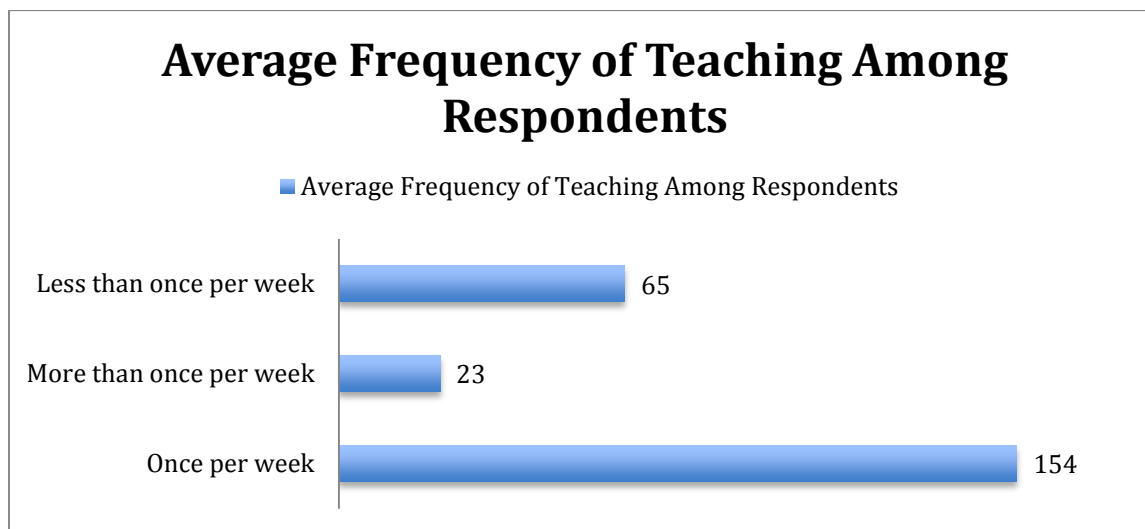


Figure 4. Average frequency of teaching among respondents—analysis one.

Analysis two. Participant responses were divided into seven different groups. The largest group had 66 participants or 28% who indicated weekly teaching with no time period specified. The next group had 60 participants or 26% who specified teaching weekly for 2 to 6 months. Another 12 participants or 5% specified teaching weekly for 7 to 12 months. Another 17 participants or 7% specified teaching weekly for more than 12 months of their missions. A total of 40 participants or 17% indicated teaching multiple times per week; apart from 3 of those responses, there was no time period specified. A total of 18 participants or 8% stated that they taught less than once per week, generally a couple times per month. An additional 22 participants or 9% stated that they taught less than once per week, indicating that it was very infrequently or rare. A further 7 participants either gave an inconclusive answer, or chose not to respond; they have not been included in the chart percentages.

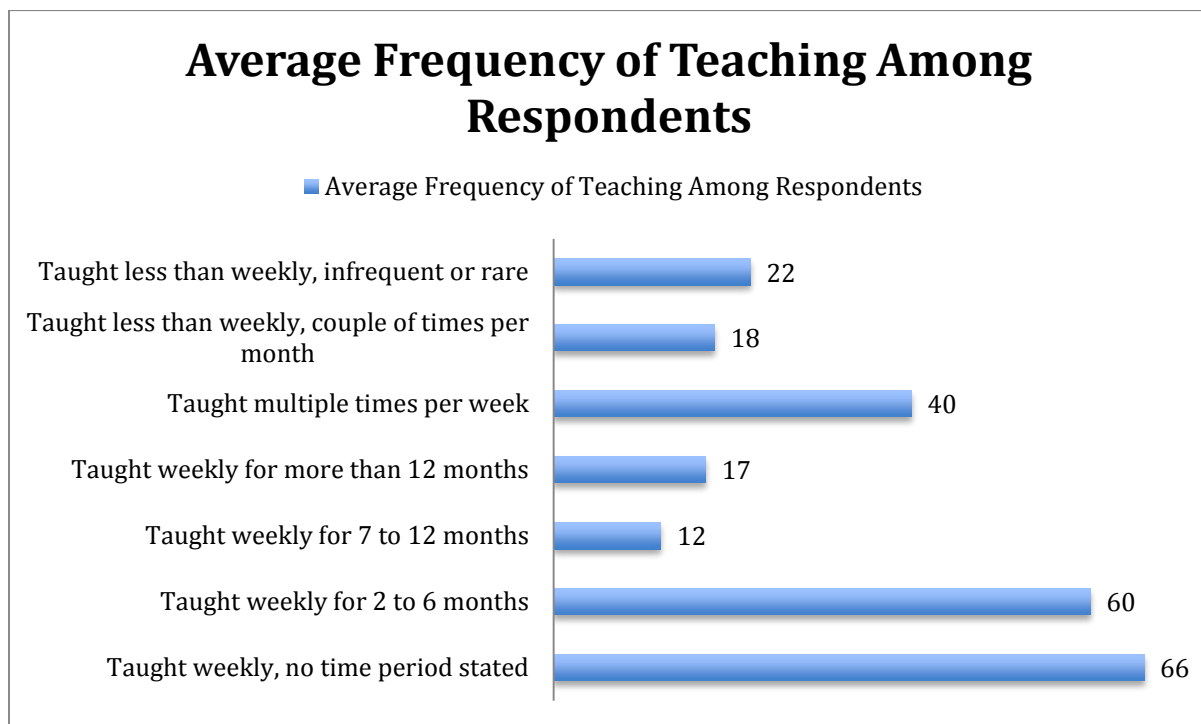


Figure 5. Average frequency of teaching among respondents—analysis two.

Of interest is the fact that the majority of respondents indicated that they taught weekly or more. This adds weight to the notion that missionaries are putting forth serious time and effort into the ESL teaching. Many respondents stated that their ESL teaching frequency varied. For example, one stated, “some areas [ESL teaching] was once per week, other areas it wasn't done at all. But, majority of my mission was once per week.” Another stated that their ESL classes were held “usually once a week for the entire two years.” Yet another affirmed, “it was very dependent on the area I was in. In some areas every week, in others I didn't teach English except to my companions.”

2. Geographical Mission Location of Participants

The geographical location where participants served their missions greatly varied. The following table shows the various locations where participants served their missions. Note that

the responses are ordered according to the number of respondents who served in that particular area. The areas that received the most responses are listed first, with the USA being the largest participant response group at 38 respondents. Those with the least (i.e. one or two respondents only) are not included in the table, but are listed below the table. In situations where there are multiple mission locations that have equal amounts of recorded responses from participants, I have listed the mission locations in alphabetical order. Also note that there were five respondents who specifically stated that their missions spanned across different countries, so I have included those respondents in accordingly labeled groups. See the following table for a breakdown of mission location details.

Table 1

Mission Location of Participants in Order of Commonality

Mission Location—Country	Number of Participants Who Served There
USA	38
Brazil	33
Japan	22
Italy	18
Chile	14
Mexico	13
Indonesia	8
Philippines	7
Russia	7
Spain	6
Peru	6
Adriatic mission (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia)	5
Africa	5
Guatemala	5
Singapore	5
Czech/Slovak Mission (The Czech Republic and Slovakia)	4
Pacific Islands (Fiji, Vanuatu, Tahiti)	4

Thailand	4
Canada	3
El Salvador	3
Paraguay	3
Romania	3

In addition to mission countries displayed in Table 1, there were five countries represented by only two participants: Argentina, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and South Korea. An additional 13 mission areas were represented by only one participant: Australia, Austria, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Norway, Portugal, Taiwan, Uruguay, West Indies mission (Martinique, French Guyana, Guadeloupe). Note that the total numbers itemized in this geographical list add to an aggregate of only 239 participants. A further three participants chose not to respond to this question.

It is interesting that the top four countries represented—with respect to participant quantity—were the USA, Brazil, Japan, and Italy. It is curious that some mission areas were well represented by multiple respondents, while others had very little respondent representation. This may be due to a large ESL teaching presence among higher-represented areas. However, a more likely reason could simply be due to the implications of convenience sampling, and the luck of distribution regarding who had knowledge of, or access to, the survey link. Nonetheless, this does provide some valuable insight into the demographics of responses received, as well as their geographical boundaries. Additionally, understanding the demographics of respondents can provide awareness in helping to know where to focus any follow-up studies or efforts to help the missionaries in these areas. There are of course many other mission locations not represented at all. Thus, while the information presented in this study is by no means conclusive or definitively representational of *all* mission areas, the information that has been presented is insightful, and does provide a solid overall picture.

3. Timeframe of Participants' Missionary Service

Participants were asked to indicate the year(s) in which they served their missions. The purpose for this question was to gain insight into the respondents' general timeframe for teaching ESL classes, and also to ensure that survey answers were representative of the target participant group. The following figure shows their years of service organized into seven specified categories. Those who indicated that they returned within the last five years were broken down into single years; 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, and 2011. Those who returned during the years of 2006 and 2011 were placed in a single group, and those who returned in 2005 or earlier were placed in a single group. Out of the 242 participant total, there were two who gave incomplete or incomprehensible responses, and two who chose not to answer this question at all; their absence of adequate response has not been included in the statistics of the analysis.

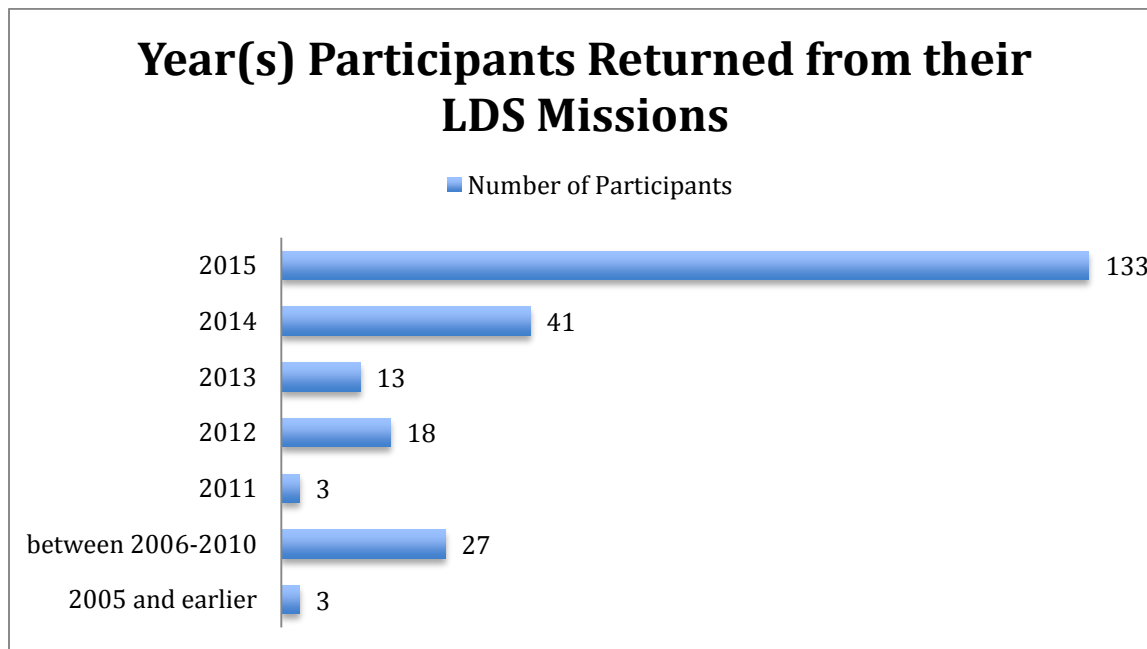


Figure 6. Year(s) participants returned from their LDS missions.

According to these categorical groups, the majority of survey responses came from missionaries who had returned home from their missions in the year 2015, with 133 or 56% indicating the aforesaid. The next largest group, a total of 41 participants or 17%, indicated that they returned in 2014. A total of 13 participants or 6% indicated that they returned in 2013. A total of 18 participants or 8% indicated that they returned in 2012. Only three participants, or 1% indicated returning in 2011. A total of 27 participants or 11% indicated returning home between the years of 2006-2010, and a total of three participants or 1% indicated returning in 2005 or earlier. Additionally, there were 4 participants who did not answer the question.

It is important to note that the majority of respondents to this research were missionaries who had returned within the past year. Such information is very beneficial as it helps to solidify the notion that any identified problem areas in this study are indeed current and relevant to today's needs.

4. Missionaries' Intended Purpose(s) for Offering English Language Classes

Another very important category had to do with the main reasons that respondents offered ESL classes to people on their missions. For the sake of trustworthiness, it is important to strive to be as accurate as possible in recording and analyzing the responses. However, due to the qualitative nature of the responses, it was difficult to choose a singular method of categorization. Thus, with this question, the responses of participants were categorized twice into two separate analyses. The first, Figure 7, is a breakdown of all responses into three basic groups. The second, Figure 8, is a breakdown of all responses into six groups. It is important to recognize that the categories for Figure 7 were organized at face value. In other words, just the initial or ostensibly main point of each response was recorded in Figure 7. This is predominately due to the qualitative nature of responses and the desire to categorize everything into simple sections, even

with their potential response overlaps. A more detailed and specific breakdown of responses can be found in Figure 8, with greater allowance for the various qualitative dynamics in the answers.

Analysis one. The first group consisted of 163 participants, or 69% of the total respondent pool, who indicated that their primary purpose for teaching the English classes was as a proselytizing tool, to find and teach new investigators about the gospel. The next group consisted of 70 participants, or 29%, who indicated that their main purpose was to provide a service to the community in which they served. The final group consisted of 4 participants, or 2% of the total, who indicated that their main purpose was neither of the aforementioned categories; these have been classified as *other*. In no particular order, these other respondents indicated their main purposes for teaching ESL as the following; “to help people warm up to the idea that Christian churches aren't something to be afraid of,” “to activate less active people and retain recent converts,” “to simply build good relationships with both members and the community,” and “to just have fun.” An additional 4 respondents chose not to answer this question.

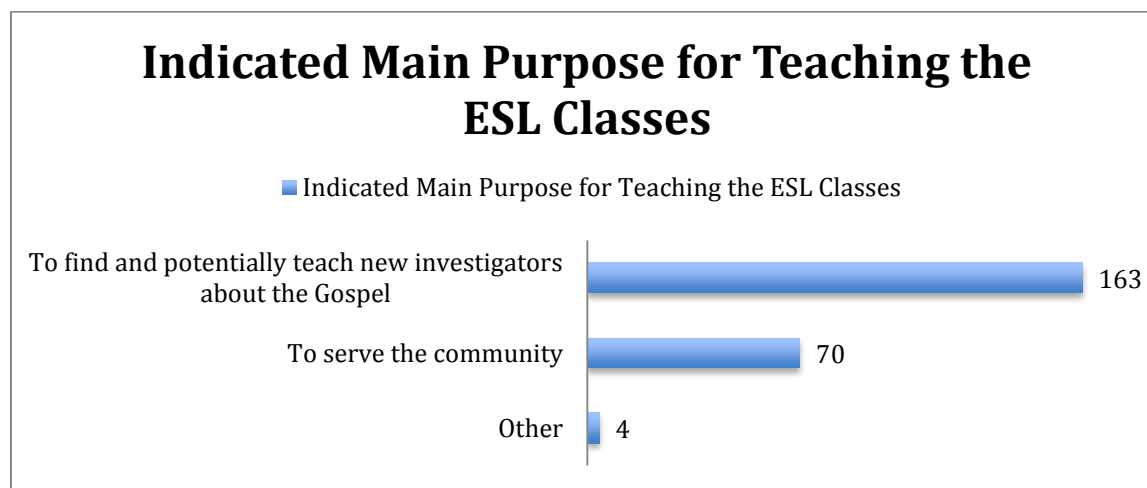


Figure 7. Indicated main purpose for teaching the English classes—analysis one.

According to these statistics, it is clear that the overall main purposes for LDS missionaries offering the English language classes are first, to find and potentially teach new investigators about the gospel, and second, to simply serve the community in which they live and work as missionaries. Note that, the majority of responses had some overlap. In fact, most respondents stated in some form or other that they wanted to both serve *and* find people to teach the gospel. However, as this response consisted of almost the entire respondent population, lumping everyone into one big category would not be as helpful. Hence the need to look a step further and delve more deeply into the specifics of each response.

Analysis two. While the first analysis provides a more generalized view, the second (this section) provides a more detailed exploration of analyzed responses. In this second analysis, the participants' indicated main purposes for teaching the ESL classes were divided into six representative categories; to preach the gospel; to provide community service; to preach the gospel and build good relationships; to preach the gospel and provide community service; to preach the gospel, build good relationships and provide community service; and other.

As Figure 8 shows, a total of 94 participants or 39% indicated that their sole main purpose for teaching ESL classes was as a proselytizing tool to find people to whom they would ultimately be able to preach the gospel. Another 18 participants, or 7% indicated that their main purpose was to preach the gospel and also to build good relationships with the people in their communities. A total of 78 participants, or 33%, indicated that their main goals were to preach the gospel and provide a service to the community. Another 18 participants, or 8%, indicated that their focus was on preaching the gospel, building good relationships with people, and also to provide service to the community. A total of 28 participants, or 12%, indicated that their sole purpose was to provide a service to the community. A total of 2 participants, or 1%, indicated

that their main focus fit into none of the above-mentioned categories. As with analysis one, there were 4 participants who chose not to respond to this question, and their lack of information has not been included in the percentage totals.

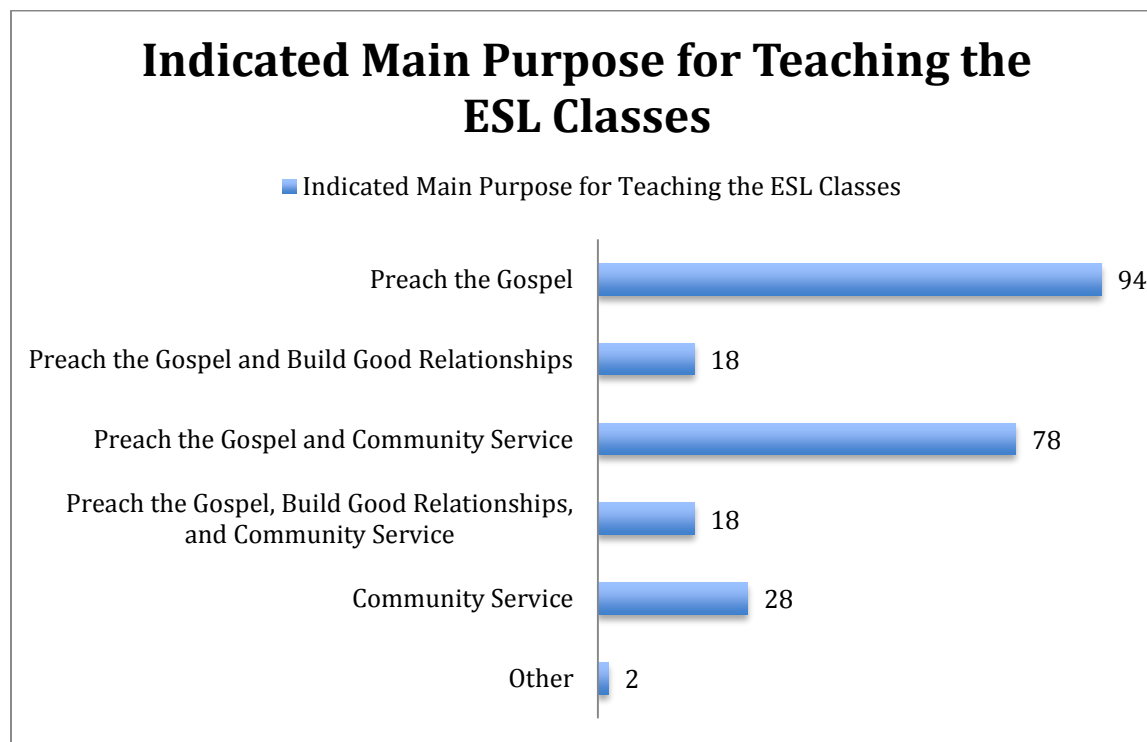


Figure 8. Indicated main purpose for teaching the English classes—analysis two.

5. Perceived Effectiveness of the ESL Classes Towards Intended Purpose(s)

Participants were asked how effective they found the English language classes in relation to their intended purpose(s) for offering the classes. Out of the 242 collected responses, 157 participants stated that they found the classes either effective or somewhat effective for their purpose, 81 participants said they did not find them effective to their purpose, and 4 chose not to answer the question.

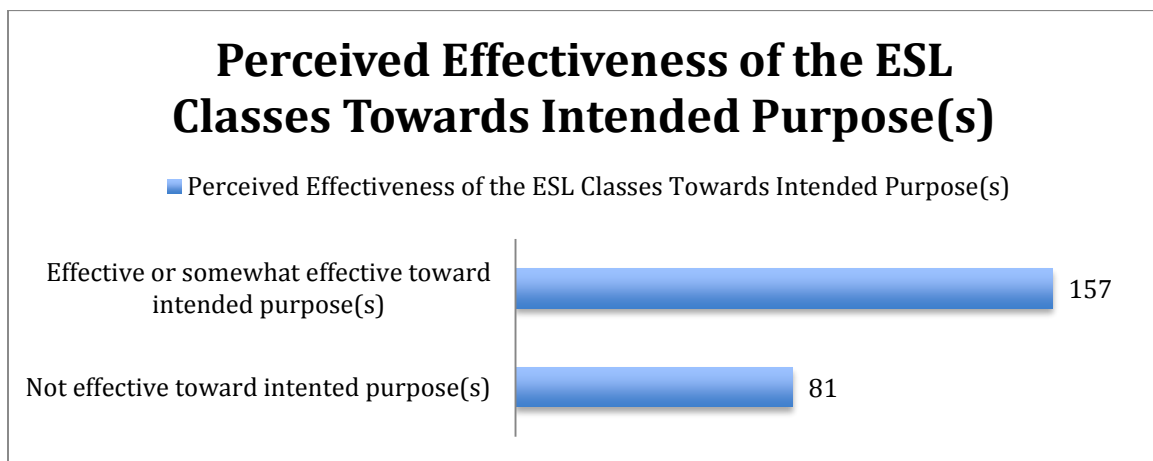


Figure 9. Perceived effectiveness of the ESL classes towards intended purpose(s).

Although beneficial to see the general overview of perceived effectiveness versus ineffectiveness as displayed in Figure 9, it would be helpful to gain a more accurate understanding of how those responses relate to the missionaries' envisioned purpose(s) for offering the ESL classes. Figure 10 provides a more specific breakdown of the various responses received for this question as they pertain to each indicated purpose. The largest response group comprised 76 participants, or 32% of the total responses. All in this group indicated that teaching the English language classes proved effective in helping achieve gospel teaching and proselytizing purposes. Another 25 participants, or 10%, indicated that the classes were only sometimes or somewhat beneficial to their gospel teaching and proselytizing purpose. A further 52 participants, or 22%, stated that the classes provided an effective form of service to the community, particularly in helping to improve their English. Four participants, or 2%, stated that it was only somewhat effective to the purpose of service. Additionally, 68 participants, or 29%, indicated that teaching ESL was not effective to helping them achieve their gospel and proselytizing purposes, and 13 participants, or 5%, stated that it was not an effective form of service to the community. Four participants provided no information.

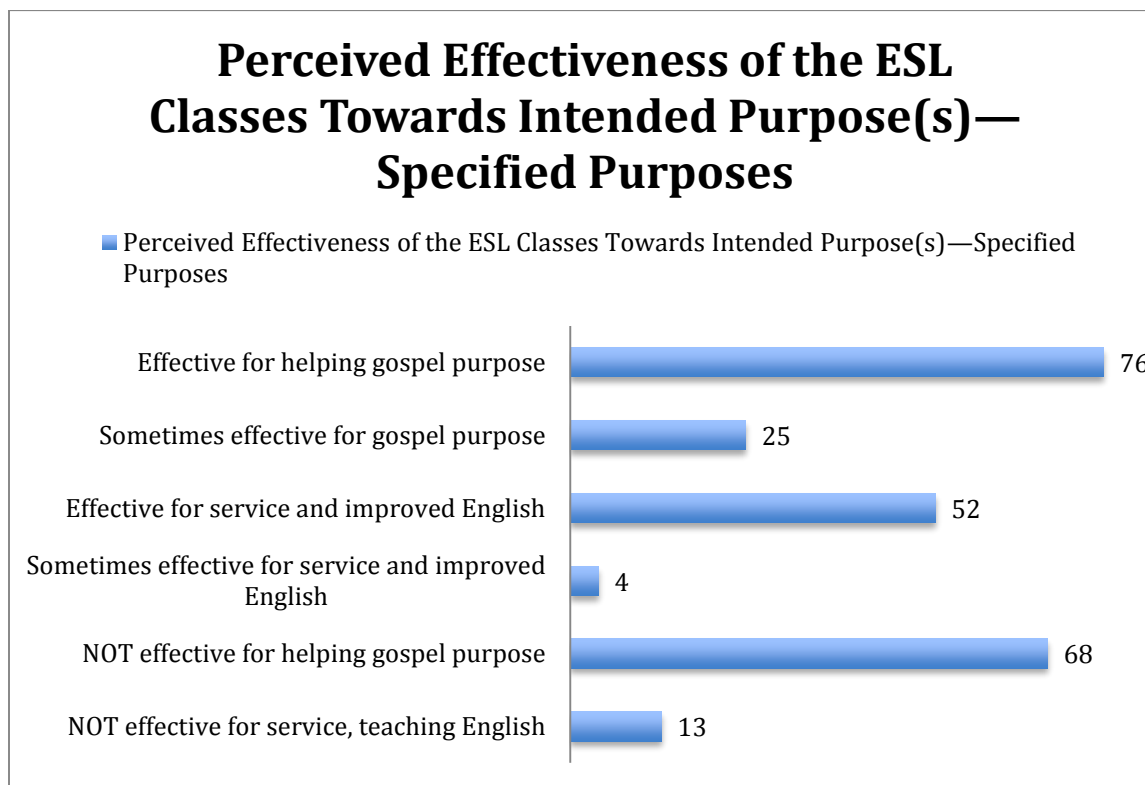


Figure 10. Perceived effectiveness of the ESL classes towards intended purpose(s)—specified purposes.

Of particular interest is the fact that a large portion of missionaries indicated that, in their view, ESL teaching was *not* an effective tool for helping towards their gospel purpose, yet an almost equal number stated the direct opposite, claiming that it *was* effective for gospel purposes. A large number of respondents also indicated that ESL teaching was not effective towards gospel purposes, such as finding new investigators, or sharing the gospel, but it *was* effective as a service for the community. Following are a few of the specific details that respondents provided in explanation for their responses.

The majority of respondents who indicated ineffectiveness (to any degree) also gave some particularly insightful detail explaining why there were such difficulties with offering ESL

classes and achieving their intended purpose for the class. When asked if the classes were effective to their missionary-focused goals, one respondent stated “Yes and No. Yes, because it brought in people who normally wouldn't have listened to the missionaries. No, because the classes weren't as effective as they could have been. People in our areas thought the classes were a lie and that we were really just trying to baptize everyone and make them a part of our 'cult'.” Another respondent indicated, “It was an effective way to do community service, but not for finding new investigators.” Another specified, “many people came for the English, but not many people were interested in learning about the Gospel.” Another responded with, “Not really. We didn't really know how to conduct an English class. There wasn't a huge market for it.”

Some respondents also felt that their time was being wasted. For example, one respondent stated “We had to spend time advertising, planning the lessons, and the actual teaching and not enough people were coming.” Another similarly affirmed, “after a couple of weeks everybody stopped coming.” Others felt that a main problem was the lack of ESL teaching knowledge or ESL materials. For example, one stated, “The classes we gave did not have well-defined curriculum so people didn't feel the need to attend class regularly.” Another declared, “We didn't really know how to conduct a English class.”

Of course on the flip side, there were many who did find ESL teaching to be effective towards their intended purposes. For example one respondent stated “Yes because we were able to serve them and they got to know us and presented us with the chance to teach them the gospel, which was our main purpose as missionaries.” Another indicated that “Many were very appreciative of our help. Many also became interested in our church after their contact through our English course. It was very effective for both purposes.” One respondent specified that it was not only effective, but also enjoyably so, because, in their words, “As I tried to make it

entertaining, fun, and educational, lots of people came, friendships were made, and as missionaries, we started lessons with many people.”

6. Primary Initiators of the English Language Classes in the Mission Field

All participants were asked to identify the person or persons who initiated the practice of teaching English language classes in their missions. For example, was direction coming from the mission president? Or, was it something that the local ward or branch leaders were instigating? The following chart indicates the overall responses from the participants, with primary initiators divided into four basic groups: missionaries, the mission president or other general priesthood authorities, local leaders, and public or community officials. A total of 140 participants, or 60%, stated that either they were the prime movers, or that previous missionaries in the area had initiated the idea. This was the most common response from participants. Another 38 participants, or 16%, stated that the mission president or other general priesthood authorities initiated the classes. Nine participants, or 4%, stated that the idea primarily generated from local LDS Church leaders within the ward or branch, such as the ward mission leader, or the branch president. Three participants, or 1% indicated that it was actually an idea that came from local public officials, such as the town mayor. A total of 44 participants, or 19% did not know who initiated the ESL classes, or their responses were inconclusive. There were an additional 8 participants who chose not to answer this question.

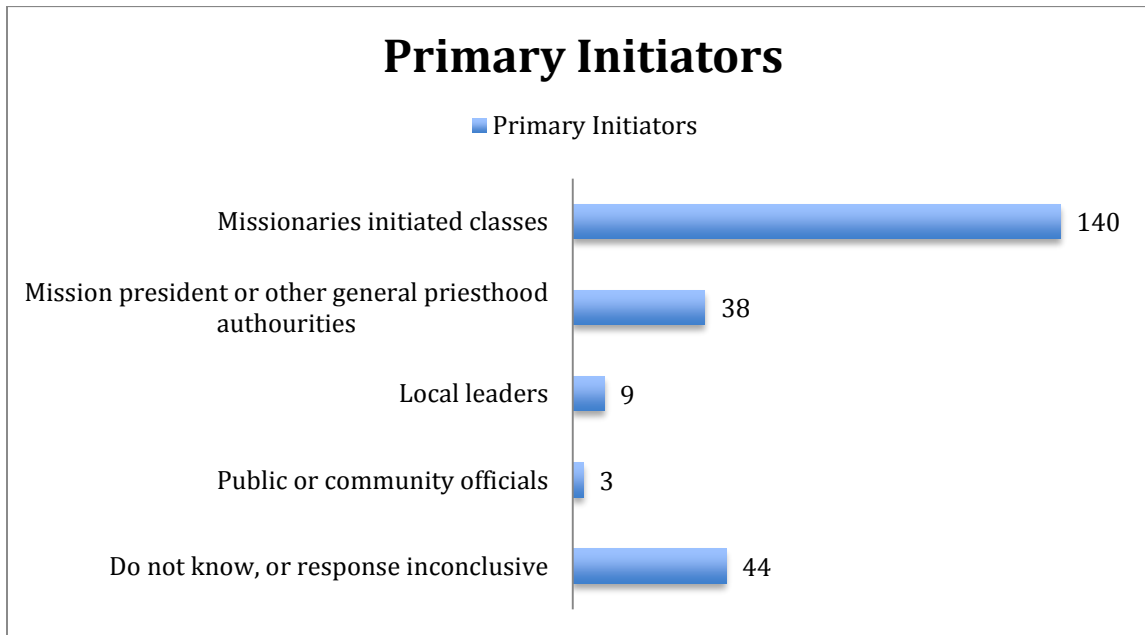


Figure 11. Primary initiators of the English language classes.

This question was particularly difficult to quantify results as there proved to be a lot of confusion in the answer. There was even confusion among participants themselves in knowing how to accurately answer the question. For example one participant specified, “In certain cities the missionaries would start it up if there wasn't a class, but I'm not sure who originally started it in the mission”. Another stated, “I believe it was the area presidency, although it could have been the mission presidency; anyway, it had been established so long ago that it could be Church Headquarters for all I know.” It is for this reason that a portion of the results has been calculated as unknown or inconclusive. Also of interest is the fact that 60% of all respondents indicated that it was the missionaries themselves who instigated the ESL classes. There may be an indicative correlation with the findings of Figure 7, which reveals a similar percentage of the respondent population indicating that their main purpose was a proselytizing and gospel teaching one.

7. Average Number of Students Attending the English Classes

Participants were asked about the average size of their classes (i.e. how many students on average attended). There were a wide variety of responses. For the sake of clarity, I have categorized those responses into four main groups. The first group contains responses from 60 participants, or 25%, who indicated that they generally received 5 students or less. The second denotes 98 participants, or 41%, who generally received 6 to 10 students. The third denotes 53 participants, or 22%, generally received 11 to 20 students. The final group represents those who generally received more than 20 students in each class. There were an additional 4 respondents did not provide any response to this question.

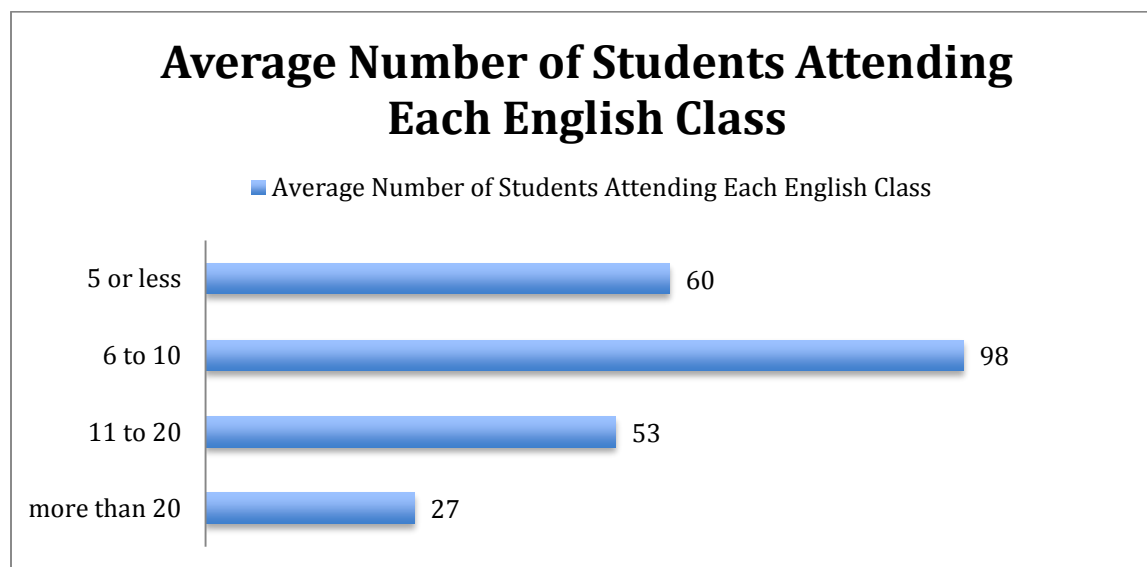


Figure 12. Average number of students attending each English class.

8. Meeting-place Location of the English Language Classes

Participants were asked where they generally held their English language classes (i.e. in what building or setting). The responses were divided into five basic categories. A total of 196 participants, or 83%, indicated that they met exclusively in LDS Church buildings. Another 25

participants, or 11%, indicated that they met in either LDS Church buildings, or in LDS member homes. Two participants, or 1%, indicated that they exclusively met in LDS member homes. Another 8 participants, or 3%, indicated that they met in either LDS Church buildings or in local public buildings. Four participants, or 2%, stated that they exclusively met in local public buildings. Note that the most commonly indicated public buildings were public libraries, town halls, and local schools. The final 7 participants chose not to respond to this question.

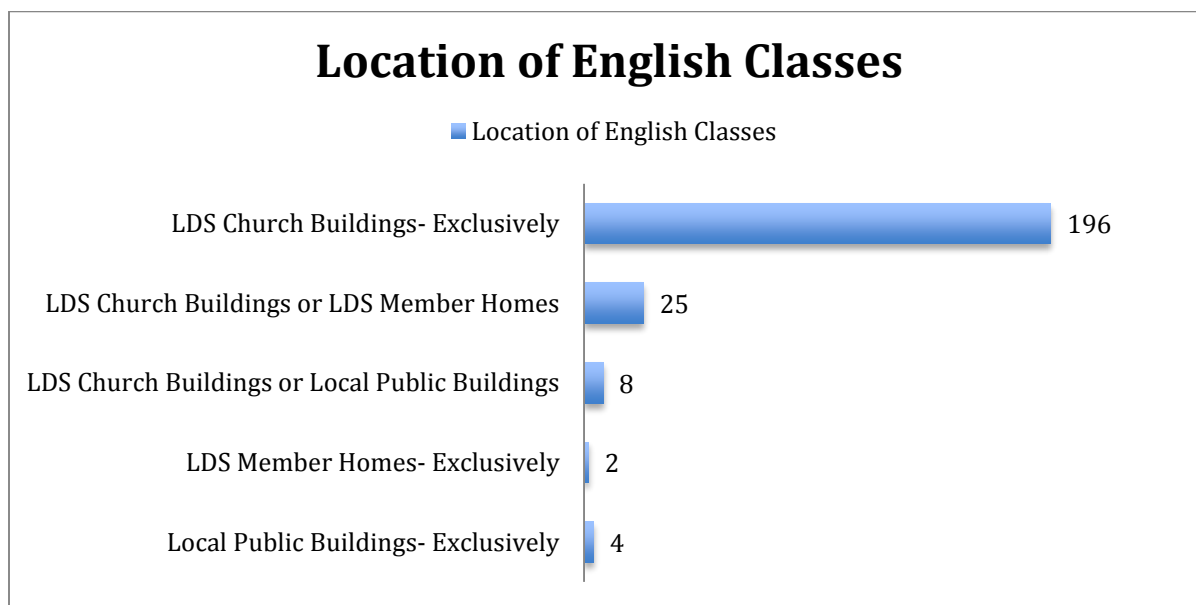


Figure 13. Location where English classes were held.

It was anticipated that most participants would state that they met in an LDS Church buildings, and the findings confirmed that such is the case, largely due to the fact that these buildings are already property of the LDS Church, and LDS missionaries typically have free access to the facilities.

9. Materials Commonly Used to Assist with the English Language Classes

Participants were asked what materials they used (if any), to help them as they taught the classes. Given the wide-ranging assortment of unique responses, this particular question was

somewhat difficult to categorize. Thus, two different systematic analyses were carried out and are presented here for analytical comparison. Both analyses display interesting trends in terms of what has and has not been the most common materials among the missionaries.

Analysis one. This analysis is concentrated on ESL versus non-ESL materials. It looks at whether or not the missionaries used any type of language learning or ESL specific materials to teach their ESL classes. Where answered affirmative, it identifies whether those ESL materials were generally obtained from LDS Church sources, or non-LDS sources.

As shown in Figure 14, the largest group consisted of 94 participants, or 41%, who stated that no ESL materials were used. A few participants indicated that they would have appreciated ESL materials, with comments such as “It would have been better if we actually had real teaching materials with us. We sort of just worked with what we had, which was not a lot.”

A further 73 participants, or 32%, indicated that they sometimes used ESL materials, but specified that they were generally deemed inadequate, and were infrequently available. This group does not specify a source for those infrequent materials.

Another 56 participants, or 24%, stated that the LDS Church provided the only ESL or language specific materials that they used. These generally consisted of language learning materials received in the MTC¹⁰. Originally these materials were given to English speaking missionaries in order to help them learn their mission language, and generally contained items such as a bilingual dictionary and a reference book with Church specific words and phrases.

¹⁰ LDS Missionary Training Center

Participants who indicated using these MTC distributed materials to teach ESL would, in essence, simply reverse the arrangement in which the information was presented in order to teach English. Also included in this group were 14 participants who specified using a program entitled Daily Dose (DD). Although DD is not an official LDS resource, for the intents of this analysis it is considered an affiliate, as it strives to offer simple ESL lessons to a predominately LDS audience, and the missionaries received the DD materials through LDS sources, such as local ecclesiastical leaders.

A small group of 6 participants, or 3%, indicated that they used ESL or language learning materials obtained from random sources outside the LDS Church. One responder indicated that they were even using their personal funds to go to Wal-Mart and buy random ESL books. There were an additional 13 participants who did not respond to this question.

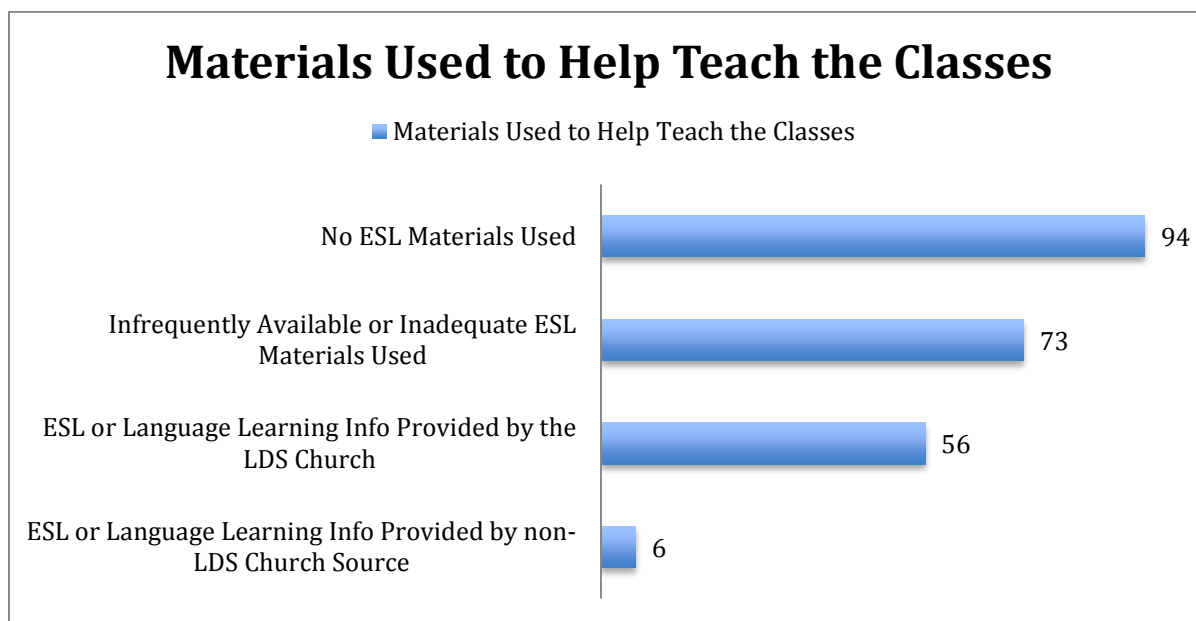


Figure 14. Main materials used to help teach the classes—analysis one.

Analysis two. This analysis carried out a more exhaustive classification of the particulars regarding what exact materials the missionaries were using. Unlike Figure 14, which was

focused on ESL specificities, Figure 15 is concerned with whether or not the missionaries used *any* materials, and if so, what are the specifics of those materials. To this end, the responses were into six sectors; (1) used language learning materials or textbooks; (2) used gospel-based materials, (3) used technology; (4) used no materials; (5) used only generic classroom materials; (6) used only own knowledge, along with anything that happened to be lying around at the time.

As Figure 15 illustrates, group one received the largest number of responses, with 114 participants, or 50%, indicating in various degrees that language-learning materials or textbooks were used, although the standard or quality of these materials was not very consistent. The next largest group had 44 participants, or 19%, indicating that they only used generic classroom materials, such and chalkboards, basic dictionaries, pens and paper, etc. This was essentially because that is all that was available to them at the time. Interestingly, almost all respondents who specified using the chalkboard (or whiteboard) also stipulated that it was the most advantageous tool in their ESL teaching, and that they found it extremely versatile and effective. This may be due to the simple practicality and versatility of its use.

A total of 18 participants, or 8%, indicated that they predominantly used religious or gospel-based materials. Among the most common responses were showing video clips with gospel messages, such as Mormon Messages¹¹, utilizing LDS Church magazines such as the Ensign or Liahona, singing from LDS hymnbooks, and teaching from English versions of assorted missionary pamphlets. An additional 31 participants, or 13%, denoted that the only materials they used were whatever happened to be randomly available at the time, and using

¹¹ Short video clips produced by the LDS Church on a variety of inspirational topics. Some examples can be found here: <https://www.mormonchannel.org/watch/series/mormon-messages>

these items they just taught based on whatever creative ideas and knowledge they could think of at the time. Respondents in this group often included the use of generic classroom materials. A further 15 participants, or 7%, concluded that, on the whole, they used absolutely no materials at all, simply because there were none available. Seven participants, or 3%, made specific reference to the frequent use of some form of technology, and, of interest is the fact that all who indicated using technology in their ESL teaching, also specified that they found it very effective and helpful. As likewise indicated in analysis one, an additional 13 participants did not provide any response.

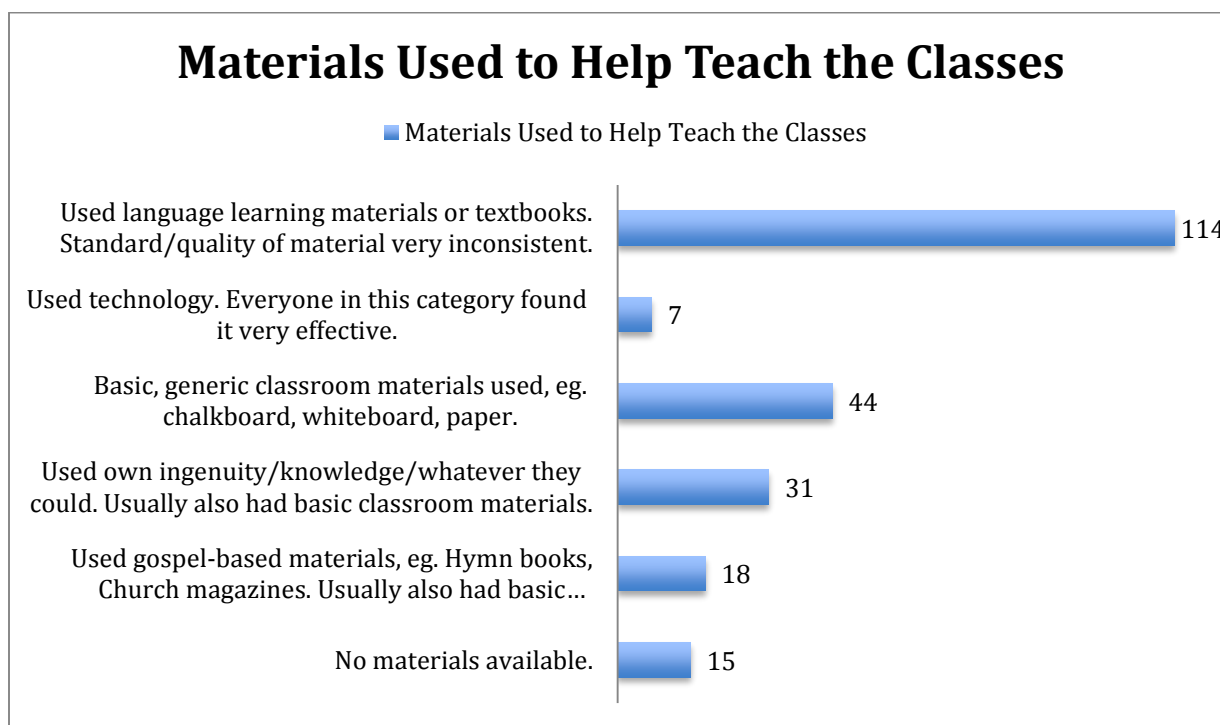


Figure 15. Main materials used to help teach the classes—analysis two.

From the data results it is clear that there were many variations in terms of materials used, the quality of those materials, and how consistently (or inconsistently) the missionaries utilized them. Many respondents acknowledged this variation in detail. For example, several indicated comments similar to this: “There were a few manuals but not every area used them. Often it was

the missionaries coming up with stuff.” Others specified a wide-ranging list of materials used, for example, “random, whatever we could find. or, sometimes left over worksheets we found lying in our apartment; sometimes the Book of Mormon, or hymns; sometimes our own Preach My Gospel or missionary books; we also used local grocery store magazines, and Ensigns, or The Friend stories; sometimes the missionary pamphlets. It was never really consistent.” Others concluded with statements such as, “We didn't really have materials, I think that is the reason that it was so hard. We had a book that was not very good and so we just ended up making it up on the spot most of the time.”

It should be noted that many respondents indicated that they also want help in this area; they would really appreciate better resources to use in their ESL teaching. For example, one declared, “I wish that we could have a real ESL textbook to work from sometimes.” Another stated, “we did not have many tools on hand to teach with,” and another indicated that a “teaching curriculum for missionaries would be a big help.” Numerous respondents also implied that they would have appreciated help, specifying that they were willing to do the best that they could but that they were limited, in both resources and pedagogical knowledge. One stated, “We used as much time as was given to us. We tried to build off of each concept. We were beginners in teaching a language so it was more difficult.” Another concluded with, “[We had] nothing... We needed help.”

Effectiveness of materials used. Along with the query regarding what materials were used, participants were also asked how effective or ineffective they found those materials for teaching ESL. There was a wide array of responses, indicating a lot of variance in missionaries’ experiences with teaching ESL. The following information provides a breakdown of the responses received regarding the effectiveness of the materials used to teach ESL classes.

Out of the 114 participants who indicated using some form of textbook or materials, 71 stated that they found it useful and effective, 33 stated that it was not useful, 6 specified that their own ideas were better, and 4 had no comment. It is interesting to note that, the majority of participants in this group who found it unhelpful or who preferred their own ideas specified that this was because the material was inadequate, too complicated, or they lacked training for how to utilize it properly. Out of the 44 participants who indicated only using generic classroom materials, 38 specified that they found using a chalkboard or whiteboard extremely beneficial. Four participants found generic classroom materials ineffective, and one stated that their own ideas were better, and one had no further comment. Out of the 31 participants who indicated that they just used whatever materials they could find in conjunction with their own possessions, creative ideas, and personal knowledge, 14 stated that they found this to be very effective, 12 indicated that they found this be either ineffective or inadequate, and 5 had no further comment. Out of the 18 participants who indicated using a lot of LDS gospel materials, 5 stated that they were helpful or effective for teaching the ESL classes, 12 stated that they unhelpful or ineffective, and 1 made no comment. Those who found it ineffective indicated that it was because their students often did not like the subject matter, or the content of the gospel materials did not specifically assist with English learning. Some suggested that it would be beneficial to have a better understanding or perhaps some training for how to appropriately incorporate gospel materials into their ESL classes. Out of the 15 participants who indicated zero access to any materials, 8 specified that this was highly ineffective for ESL teaching, and the other 7 made no comment. Out of the 7 participants who indicated frequent use of technology, all 7 of them stated that this was extremely useful and helpful for their ESL teaching. A couple of them also specified that it was particularly beneficial to be able to have access to the internet and online

ESL resources. All who indicated use of technology in their ESL classes found it to be extremely useful.

10. Perceived Support that Missionaries Received

Participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5, how well supported they felt in their efforts to prepare and teach good English language classes while on their missions. The following table, Table 2, is representative of their responses. There are five columns, ranging from 1—not supported at all, to 5—very strongly supported. The number of participants who indicated each level of support is tabled below the respective column. Note that not all numbers add up to the complete 242 responses, because there were some participants who chose not to respond in certain columns. Thus, their lack of response has not been charted.

Table 2

Perceived Amount of Support Received to Teach the English Language Classes

	1—Not Supportive At All	2—Very Minimal Support	3—Some-what Supportive	4—Very Supportive	5—Very Strongly Supportive
LDS Church headquarters	68	38	54	44	25
The MTC	98	46	46	28	14
The mission president	20	41	51	72	51
District and zone leaders	17	40	53	76	49
Fellow missionaries	5	24	58	94	54

Local LDS Church LEADERS	25	46	64	68	32
Local LDS Church MEMBERS	14	37	71	68	45
The local community	45	61	72	41	16
Investigators	21	44	78	65	27

11. Perceived Positive or Negative Experience, and Why

Participants were asked whether or not they enjoyed teaching the English language classes on their missions, and why they found it a positive or negative experience. Out of the 242 participants asked, 124 stated that it was an overall positive experience, 103 stated that it was an overall negative experience, and 15 chose to give no response.

Perceived positive experience. Out of the 124 who indicated that teaching ESL was an overall positive experience, 95 specified that it was positive primarily because of the service rendered through doing so. Participants in this group reported an overall love to serve, as well as a general sense of fulfillment and of personal enjoyment through this task. The other 29 participants stated that teaching ESL was typically a positive experience because of their focus on the gospel, and their aim to share the gospel was met.

Table 3

Reasons that Teaching the English Classes was Perceived as a Positive Experience Overall

Reason it was a Positive Experience	Number of Participants
The goal of service was met, and/or was personally enjoyable to serve.	95
The goal to find people and/or share the gospel with them was successfully met.	29

Sample selection of quoted responses—overall positive experience. There was a large range of detailed and insightful responses from participants who perceived the ESL teaching as an overall positive experience. Out of those who identified service as an accomplished main goal, one stated, “I felt that we were providing a service that was genuinely helpful to people both in secular and spiritual aspects.” Another declared, “I realized I possessed a skill that others desperately wanted; it was almost like being able to speak English was a spiritual gift and I needed to share it with others.”

Some participants specified that, although they didn’t always have the best conditions to work in, they still found ESL teaching to be a positive experience overall. For example, one declared, “It made me feel good to contribute to the struggling community and (hopefully) help people to rise out of poverty. Sometimes the work wasn’t going well but I always felt that I was at least serving someone by teaching the class. Also it was nice to have people show up wanting to be taught rather than trying to persuade people to let you in their door.” Another professed, “I enjoyed the feeling of providing service each week, and I liked the students I taught. But I never thought I was a great teacher, and we hardly had any time to prepare lessons. I didn’t like the

stress of knowing that these people were coming to class and expecting me to teach them, only because I wasn't sure if I was making it worth their while! Still, when the members supported the program, it was very enjoyable to teach English. I'd say I enjoyed the teaching, but doing it [as] a missionary was sometimes hard.”

Several participants indicated that the ESL teaching built beneficial connections that helped open doorways for missionary work. For example, one stated, “I loved having an environment where we could interact with people one on one. It gave them a chance to see that we are normal people. They were usually much more interested in the gospel after coming to a few English courses than if we just tried to approach them on the street.” Another affirmed, “Getting to interact with people in that setting noticeably improved their opinion of missionaries.”

Various insights also came from participants who found ESL teaching to be particularly effective towards their missionary and gospel-sharing goals. For example, one concluded “It was the most effective way we found people willing to hear our message. We formed friendships and created relationship of trust with people by teaching them English for free. This was so much better than approaching people on the street or knocking on their doors. That kind of thing just isn't done in the area. We would always look forward to teaching English.”

A few participants also indicated that, whilst still an overall positive experience, there were definite areas in need of improvement. For example, “It was good, but could have been better if we were able to better focus on being missionaries while also teaching effectively.”

Perceived negative experience. Out of those who indicated it being a negative experience, 39 participants stated that it was mainly negative because of mechanics—i.e. they

were not trained to teach, they had little to no beneficial resources to help with the classes, and the students' English skills were extremely low making it difficult to decipher if any progress was being made. Another 36 participants stated that it was an overall negative experience because they really felt like it was a waste of time. Their aim to share the gospel was not met, and overall, it was simply not effective to their purpose as missionaries, both in proselytizing and in beneficial service to the community. A further 28 participants perceived it is as a negative experience because the students were not very dedicated or motivated; they were not coming, they were not doing their homework, and there was little to no support anywhere to help with effectual progress.

Table 4

Reasons that Teaching the English Classes was Perceived as a Negative Experience Overall

Reason it was a Negative Experience	Number of Participants
Mechanics- no training to teach, no resources, low English skill etc.	39
The aim to share gospel not met, wasted time, not effective.	36
The people were not coming, they were not doing homework, not very committed and/or there was no support.	28

Sample selection of quoted responses—overall negative experience. Many of the participants who perceived ESL teaching to be an overall negative experience offered some very insightful reasons as to why. A number of respondents indicated that they felt the classes were a

waste of time and ineffective. For example, one stated, “I personally never really enjoyed English teaching, even with my companions. [...] I felt that one or even several classes were pretty much worthless. If someone wants to learn English, they easily can. But just some classes from missionaries who don't know how to teach their native language isn't going to do much.” Another declared, “It was a lot of work with minimal success overall.” And another simply concluded, “Nobody came to our classes.”

In addition, many also felt that their ESL teaching efforts were generally lacking support. For instance, one declared, “There was virtually NO support from anyone in or out of the mission. They [the English classes] were typically less effective in finding new investigators than other activities. The lessons did not continue after missionaries were transferred. They had to be restarted several times in the year and no one really learned English in the end.” Another affirmed, “If we had had more support from the members, I would have liked it more because it would have been more effective.”

A number of participants indicated both lack of support and discouragement when their missionary goals were not met. For example, one stated, “I didn't feel we were successful in achieving our goals of finding people to teach by using the English classes as a finding tool. The attendance was low and inconsistent, as was the support we received. I enjoyed it teaching the classes at first, but soon became disappointed with the results.” Another specified, “It wasn't well enough outlined or supported and I wasn't sure what my role was in the whole process since it was something I was trying to continue that the past missionaries had set up.” One participant even indicated that in their mission they were specifically advised against ESL teaching; “Students were not truly interested 90% of the time. Then those who were interested required

more personal time and I was advised that that was not the most productive use of my time (teaching one student English instead of visiting people).”

Conclusion. There are some very interesting insights regarding the reasons behind *why* participants found ESL teaching to be a positive or negative experience. This information is extremely beneficial because it allows for an insider’s perspective into the missionary ESL teaching situation. It offers some unique insight as to why there are such mixed feelings regarding whether or not missionaries should even teach ESL classes. This information lends itself towards a more solidified acknowledgement that, if ESL teaching is to continue among missionaries, there is a great need for clarified direction and support to help ensure that it is a positive and beneficial experience for all involved.

Overall Analyses Conclusion

These statistics are intriguing. In combing through the details of the various responses, and the analyses of those responses, it has been interesting to note various patterns in the categorized portions that appear to have strong consolidation. With regard to what the missionaries have explained that they do, there seems to be the consistent message that these missionaries are simply doing the very best they can, even with an exceptionally limited amount of training and resources. While several participants said they found ESL teaching to be ineffective, several others said that the English language classes were effective. Many of those stated that it would have been extremely helpful to them, and to their time constraints, if they could have had some ready-made lesson plans already organized for them. Perhaps these pre-organized lesson supports would help more missionaries to feel that their ESL teaching efforts are valuable. Examples of how this could happen would be through providing high-quality

teaching materials that have simple-to-follow lesson plans and that are organized and that can also help ensure that their efforts to focus their time effectively are not minimized.

Moreover, the data gathered from these qualitative analyses provide a clearer overall picture of the various intricacies and details of the current state in which LDS missionaries are finding themselves as they strive to teach English language classes; and, what has been overwhelmingly clear is that there is no consistency in these ESL teaching trends. There is great variance in materials used, support received, indicated main purposes, levels of effectiveness, and attitudes towards the ESL teaching experience. This information lends itself to a more solidified acknowledgement that there is a great need for linguistic and TESOL professionals to step in and provide some sort of assistance to the missionaries in this aspect of their missionary service.

Chapter Five: Results and Discussion

This research was designed to provide a platform for some in-depth analyses and discussion regarding the current teaching practices of LDS missionaries who teach English language classes in various forms and settings while on their missions. The response data collected was extremely beneficial in providing in-depth insight into the reality of what actually goes on—with regard to this research topic—when missionaries are out in the field. The responses and their various categorizations have been most valuable in providing a foundational study upon which further research and studies can be based, hopefully with the intent to assist in the refinement, improvement and/or consolidation of the strategies and teaching practices realized in this current research.

Recall to mind the original research questions of this study; (1) What are the current ESL teaching habits and practices of LDS missionaries?; (2) What do these practices indicate about the general qualitative state of English language teaching among LDS missionaries globally?; and (3) What can we learn from these findings that can provide beneficial refinement going forward? The main intent of this research has been three-fold; first to find out what English teaching practices LDS missionaries currently have, second, to analyze those findings in a way that clearly highlights any common and noteworthy responses, and third, to provide a foundational platform of information that can utilize the findings of this research in a practical manner, hopefully to be beneficial to LDS missionaries going forward.

Following is a brief discussion of the results discovered through this study, specifically with regard each of these research questions. Note that questions (1) and (2) have been combined, due to the similarities and cross-overs in the comparison between what the

missionaries are currently doing, and what this indicates about the general quality of their teaching.

1. What are the current ESL teaching habits and practices of LDS missionaries? 2. What do these practices indicate about the general qualitative state of English language teaching among LDS missionaries globally?

With regard to finding what missionaries are currently doing, it is clear from the analysis that, to date, there has been no singular, consistent manner in which these missionaries teach English language classes. It is interesting to note that many of the missionaries who teach English language classes do desire to maintain their purpose of inviting others to come unto Christ and learn the gospel and teachings (Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service, 2004). Thus, there are those who have found ways to implement gospel materials into the lessons, but have not always known the best way to strategically do so in a manner that is also linguistically and pedagogically beneficial to the learner.

Missionaries are doing the best they can. In meticulously reading, categorizing, and analyzing the various responses from all of the returned missionary participants, there is one thing that consistently stands out over and over: that the LDS missionaries who go out and voluntarily teach English language classes on their missions are simply striving to do the best that they can. They are sincere in their efforts, and they are willing to work hard and to serve. Unfortunately they do not have professional academic or linguistic training behind them, nor do they have many (if any) excellent ESL teaching materials, but nonetheless, they go out with what they have, and they give it earnest dedication.

Missionaries need and want help. The aforementioned observation is thoroughly impressive. However, it is also clear that these missionaries need help. Two opposing conclusions could be drawn from this premise: one, that we need to help the missionaries, or two, we need to stop the ESL teaching among missionaries, especially since this practice is noticeably lacking in professional quality and focus. However, based on the many respondents' pleas for help, I would lean towards the first conclusion. They need help, and we should help them. We should do this, not only because they *want* help, but also because these missionaries do seem to provide a beneficial service to the communities in which they serve. This was evidenced in various comments, such as "I felt that we were providing a service that was genuinely helpful to people both in secular and spiritual aspects" and "It was fun to feel like you were helping them. They were so grateful which made me feel like it was worth it."

There was some acknowledgement of leadership support, for example one respondent stated that "I am grateful for my MTC teachers and the language learning program the church offers." However, a greater number of respondents indicated that they would really have appreciated better leadership support in their ESL teaching efforts. For example, one respondent stated "It would be great to see more materials and support given from church headquarters and mission leaders to do this." Another stated, "It is worth the effort if support is given by the local members and church leadership. Without their support the classes will dwindle."

Others specified that they would have appreciated more specific help with the organization and the timeliness of the classes. For example, one stated that teaching ESL "is a great thing, but has to be very ORGANIZED and ANNOUNCED or it will not benefit everyone." Another declared, "I wish there had been more church guidelines about English teaching. I always felt like to really prepare for English class, I had to take tons of time out of

other proselyting, which made me feel guilty (especially since the classes never really led to investigators).”

One particularly lengthy yet highly insightful comment came from a respondent who contended that missionaries both need and want help, and concluded;

If programs are to be effective, missionaries would need to be trained on how to teach effectively, the ward would need to be mobilized, and leaders would need to give full support. One of the main problems is that English language teaching is often viewed as a way of getting out of working and therefore is unsupported by all parties involved. There would need to be commitment from the mission president, leadership, and members to make this work effectively and we would have to have an ongoing program through which investigators can progress and see real results, instead of a once-a-week meeting that yields few results and disapproval from other missionaries. If there could be a system in place where a member is called to teach the class at least every other day and the missionaries HELP by giving native-speaker feedback, corrections, etc., and if the class progressed to a level of real proficiency (as missionaries do but on a much smaller scale), we could see some real results. Everyone we talked to on the street about the idea of learning English was receptive to the idea and more likely to enter the church for an English class than for nearly anything else we invited them to do. If we could advertise a real class with real results, we could pack members and investigators into the church. Members especially would love to learn English, they just didn't know how. I also believe that members would be more likely to bring friends to a class of English than to a fireside, activity, or any other event at the church because they see it as adding value in a

way their friends will want and will benefit from. It would need to be structured and committed to in the mission and in the ward, but it could have a big impact if done right.

Missionaries have limitations. This study verifies the fact that these LDS missionaries are, by and large, very limited on time, training, and resources for ESL teaching, and many wish they had more. It also highlights the general consensus that these missionaries do not wish to dedicate a large quantity of time to developing solid ESL lesson plans. The predominant feeling is that they are set apart¹² specifically as missionaries, and thus they should be, and desire to be, primarily focused on direct missionary tasks that will share the gospel message and bring souls unto Christ (Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service, 2004, p. 1).

3. What can we learn from these findings that can provide beneficial refinement going forward?

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge how remarkable it is that, although there was no monetary compensation or incentives provided, hundreds of people chose to voluntarily respond to the survey questions and provide in depth answers. This suggests a great desire among the missionaries to talk about their experiences, particularly with regard to teaching ESL on their missions. It supports the notion that they truly desire to help bring awareness to areas that are in need of refining attention. When people with first hand knowledge and experience speak out, it is worthy of acknowledgement, and worth paying attention to.

¹²“The meaning of being set apart to service in the Church is symbolically a setting apart (a separation) from the world to act on a higher plane (Lev. 20:26; Num. 8:14; Ezra 8:24; Rom. 1:1). The act of setting apart is referred to in the Bible in a number of places, though not always using the same terminology.” (Thompson, 1992, p. 1300)

Refine and clarify the focus. Upon reading the participants' feedback and conducting the analyses, I noted that an overwhelming majority of them either implied or directly indicated a desire for clearer focus or direction in their ESL teaching. While some felt they were offering a great service, others felt the focus was on using ESL teaching as a proselytizing tool. Still, others felt that they were ill equipped for teaching ESL, and worried that it was a waste of time. Overall, the exact purpose for offering the ESL classes was not consistent or clear. It could be very beneficial to clarify the purpose both for the missionaries as well as their students.

Throughout the analytical process of this research, I have come to understand on a deeper level just how valuable and appreciated it would be for LDS missionaries to have help in balancing a clear focus on their missionary goals, with quality ESL teaching helps. Some participants wished that there had been a lesson plan already laid out for them, and many of those also indicated that they would have appreciated appropriate ideas for how to combine quality English language teaching with the focus of the gospel, especially since they were already striving to do so. For example, one participant stated, "We wanted them to develop English skills that they could use at work and at school so we didn't teach much gospel material in English. However we wanted to still briefly uplift them spiritually while we had the audience. For that reason we always prayed and shared a spiritual message." Another declared, "All our lessons were gospel-centered. Everything we taught was based around a gospel-principle, such as prayer." Another commented that, while they did not use gospel specific materials, they used "example sentences [which] were often church related... e.g. 'Juan likes to read the Book of Mormon'." Surely there can be a clearer, more consistent manner in which to appropriately combine the gospel sharing focuses with good quality linguistic education. This is an area that could greatly benefit from assistance from knowledgeable leaders, preferably those with an empathetic disposition towards the missionary ESL teaching situation.

Obviously there are important differences between voluntary and professional ESL classes that should be accounted for, especially when the voluntary teachers are missionaries. However, as Snow points out, “English teaching can and should be Christian vocation in its own right, not simply means to other ends or a secular task only incidentally engaged in by Christians” (Snow, 2001, p. 19). In other words, if ESL teaching is to continue among missionaries, then the focus should be clear and consistent with a well-defined purpose. Such an amalgamation between the two forces is not impossible either. In fact it could be extremely beneficial. There would be no hidden agendas, no students with the erroneous expectations of receiving English without religion (if such is to be the case), or vice versa—simply a clear connection between quality language teaching, learning, and gospel centered objectives. Various respondents said they had made efforts to this end, and stated that those efforts were generally positive for both the missionaries and the students. For example, one stated, “we taught the English class, and at the end told [the students] they could leave if they wanted, but if they wanted to stay, we would share a scripture with them and expound it in English. Everybody always stayed for the spiritual thought.” Another remarked, “we usually talked about prayer, since it was an easy topic, everyone likes to pray and are interested in praying in English.”

Many other respondents indicated that they were not sure how to proceed with the ESL class focus, because they truly wanted to support their gospel, proselytizing role as missionaries, yet they did not wish to come across as manipulative, as trying to “trick” their ESL learners into learning about the gospel message. If further focus, supportive direction, or training could be provided in light of this topic, it could be of great benefit to missionaries in the future.

Provide resources and support. Provision of linguistic training may be beneficial, so that the missionaries can be much better equipped, in and of themselves, to provide quality English learning experiences. As many have noted, they often feel like they are having to teach

an entire language with very little understanding or support. Many stated that they needed to do everything on their own: plan lessons, prepare class schedules, organize times and dates, advertise, set-up chairs, and conduct, and teach the classes. Many felt that the behind-the-scenes preparation work took too long and often yielded disappointing results, so they felt were wasting time. Providing missionaries with some quality language teaching resources could greatly assist in their efforts to provide quality service to the community in which they are teaching, and could help cut down on their preparation time. Well-organized, focused resources could also help them reach their goals of relevantly tying in gospel messages with this service. Of course, linguistic training may not be immediately feasible on such a generic, global scale. However, guidance towards the provision of quality resources is definitely something that may be achievable in the interim. Perhaps a quick and simple way to provide resources could be through the use of the internet and appropriate ESL websites, particularly since all participants who indicated using technology in their ESL teaching also found it to be extremely beneficial. Furthermore, guidance or support from official LDS Church connections, such as the MTC, could be extremely helpful and may provide a solid platform through which future missionaries could get the support they need.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Implications

The core purpose of this thesis research has been to gather and present quantifiable data through qualitative analysis of the various teaching patterns among LDS missionaries who have recently taught English language classes on their missions. After the initial stages of sorting and sifting through a variety of responses from participants, responses have been organized into clear categories and logical, recognizable groups. Not only does this provide interesting foundational information regarding the current state of ESL teaching among missionaries, but it also highlights any patterns that are considered effective or ineffective in their teaching practices. It is interesting to note that this study provides substance on a global level to the premise that there are no coherent teaching strategies, lessons, or materials currently being used. While the missionaries are doing their best, it is clear from the analysis that they would truly benefit from guidance in terms of linguistic and ESL teaching help. If this study can help bring acknowledgement and acceptance towards this reality, it can also encourage refining changes to help ensure such inconsistency does not continue. Also evident through this study is the fact that there do already exist a few effective ideas and teaching strategies implemented by the missionaries themselves, ideas that could be easily supported and enhanced as a consistent practice on a larger scale among the LDS missionaries.

Several thousands of missionaries teach English language classes. Yet, prior to this study, there had been no internationally representative analyses conducted, identifying exactly what LDS missionaries do when they teach English, or why, or how. After analyzing the responses of a large sample of those missionaries, it can be added that, in many regards, neither do they. LDS missionaries are generally not professionally trained in linguistics and TESOL. Yet many of

them still go out into the field and end up voluntarily teaching ESL at some point on their missions. Outside of this study there is no correlative data to suggest any globally common teaching patterns or teaching methods used amongst these volunteer missionary teachers. The research and collected data provided in this thesis is the first step to providing answers to such enquiries. Although certainly not utterly conclusive in its findings, this study is a solid first step, one that can lay a foundation for further in-depth, much needed analytical work to continue. It would be extremely beneficial for the information researched and the data presented in this study to be utilized in a practical manner.

Limitations

Due to the foundationally empirical nature of this research, there are several limitations and areas that could use improvement. Understanding and addressing these is a necessary requisite to ensure that a clear and accurate context of this study is maintained. Some of the most prominent constraints that should receive preliminary acknowledgement include the limitations involved with convenience sampling, potential loopholes in reliability, the ambiguous nature of some of the responses from the various participants, the restricted scope of target participants, and the imbalance or underrepresentation of certain missions and geographical locations.

Convenience Sampling. Convenience sampling is a measure of non-probability sampling. Thus, while the obvious benefits of using this sampling method include the availability of participants as well as the timeliness with which information could be gathered, there were some definite limitations as well. Opposite of probability sampling, where “every element of the population has a known probability of being included in the sample” (Statistics and Probability Dictionary, 2015), with the convenience sample there was no way of me knowing beforehand all the probability variables and controlling them. Usage of convenience sampling meant that the

response quality and quantity of gathered data was in large measure at the mercy of the voluntary participants and their ability or willingness to provide solid, informative responses in a timely manner. Of course the ideal would be to be able to gather information from the entire target population—every single LDS missionary who has ever taught ESL on their mission, not just a propitiously sampled portion. However, the ability to conduct surveys on such a grand scale would likely require a higher level of authoritative access to central LDS Church databases systems, with admittance to private contact information of the entire LDS populace. It would also necessitate the requisite means to accurately gather and organize a large-scale influx of all relevant responses—the likes of which was neither realistic nor probable for the scope of my study. Furthermore, since my study was hinged upon voluntary participation, I was not able to control a well-balanced ratio of diverse participants, or to direct participants to the optimum levels of clarity and specificity in their responses. This led to potential cause for concern regarding the validity and cohesion of the responses, as well as the quality of those responses. Nevertheless, using a convenience sample was the most practical and realistic way to gather a large amount of data in the apportioned time and given the delineated access to participants.

Reliability. Due to the qualitative nature of participants' responses, this study contains potential loopholes in inter-rater reliability. Although great efforts were put forth to maintain consistency and reliability, due to the qualitative nature of the data, it is acknowledged that the coding and categorizing of the data in the analysis may not have been 100 percent accurate. The focus was on obtaining and analyzing qualitative responses from participants, rather than pure numbers or quantitative figures. This of course meant that the data included a wide variety of opinions, ideas, and suggestions, and these needed to be categorically organized in order to provide observable data in the analysis. Conversely, many of the responses were subject to

interpretation; thus it was sometimes difficult to choose a congruent category that could best highlight the specific main points of each of the corresponding responses.

Trustworthiness was fairly solid and dependable, due to the fact that two people consistently categorized all participant responses. However, even with the meticulous sifting of the survey responses into our various chosen categories, it is still possible that another researcher's categorization method may not produce the same results. For example, inter-rater variance can be seen in the comparisons of *Figure 4* versus *Figure 5*, and *Figure 7* versus *Figure 8*. In those situations, I took the responses for those corresponding questions and organized them into specific categories. I also had my fellow researching analyst separately look at the same data and independently organize it into the groups that they perceived best. In direct comparison, it is clear to see the results of the two different categorization methods are individually distinctive, thus providing differing perspectives into the same set of data. I am positive that, if the same data had been provided to a large multitude of other researchers, they in turn would be able to categorize it into additional, unique groups. Thus, while the responses are all accounted for and every effort was made to ensure trustworthiness, the manner in which they have been grouped into their chosen categories is not exclusively definitive, and absolute reliability is largely based upon how the specific researcher chose to categorize them. In light of this context, my study serves as a foundational basis upon which a consistent yet limited lens of perspective may define the reconnoitered results.

Response ambiguity. Due to the ambiguous nature of some responses, it was necessary to make an executive decision as to where or how to include those ambiguous remarks in the categorical statistics. An example of this can be found in the responses given when participants were asked whether or not they found ESL teaching effective towards their intended purpose.

Out of those who indicated that their main purpose was to ultimately share the gospel, one contributor responded with “It was a little effective, but not as effective as we had hoped. A lot of the investigators were too busy to attend regularly, so it didn't quite work out as we had hoped.” Another responded with, “It was effective only if members brought their friends.” Yet another indicated that the efficacy for their intended purpose was “More or less. It was good in that it helped us involve members in fellowshipping investigators and recent converts. I never saw a baptism come out of it.” Thus, for the sake of uniformity (regarding this example), all three of those responses were grouped into the category of sometimes effective for gospel purposes. However—as indicated in the previous subsection on reliability limitations—it is clear that my chosen classification isn't the only one possible; there could have been variously coordinated categories for these responses. Nonetheless, without making some definitive decisions as to how to homogenize certain ambiguous responses, there would have been no way to indicatively organize and further analyze the responses. This of course limits the depths of reliance for which this study can be held accountable, and directing attention to such limitations leads to the appropriate use of the presented results.

Restricted time scope of target participants. Participants were only invited to contribute responses to this study if they were LDS returned missionaries who had returned from serving a full-time mission within the last ten years. This was to help ensure that responses were acceptably representative of the present-day, ultimately coming from missionaries who had recently returned, therefore providing a more accurate idea of the current situation out in the mission field. While there are clear benefits to having chosen this time frame, it also puts an obvious limitation on who could give responses. It is quite possible that many insightful and beneficial responses could have been received from a multitude of other returned missionaries

who had returned outside the ten-year range. If the study had not been limited to this time frame, perhaps I would have received a more accurate and completed picture of the overall ambiance of feedback representing different mission areas, especially since there would have been a larger potential pool of participants. Furthermore, if the scope was not limited to the ten years, then it may have been possible to do more crossover and comparative analyses between the various time frames of response data.

Representational imbalance or geographical underrepresentation. There was a clear imbalance or underrepresentation of responses for certain missions and geographical locations in my study. This disproportionality is in direct relation to the use of a convenience sampling method. Some mission areas received a lot of input and feedback, for example 38 responses from participants who served in the United States, and 33 from participants who served in Brazil. Contrastingly, other areas received very minimal input. For example only two responses came from participants who served in South Korea, and one response from a participant who served in Taiwan; both of these examples are of countries where ESL is in general very much valued, and thus, it is assumed that ESL classes would in actuality be a lot more frequent than the small sampling of input received in this study. It is most likely that limitations in survey distribution as well as the voluntary nature of participation are the most prominent factors in the reasoning behind such a limited view into perspectives of some missions.

Additionally, there are a few missions of the world where ESL classes are consistently supported and taught by LDS missionaries, and further contribution from more of these types of missions would have been greatly beneficial. As indicated in chapter two, one known mission for this is the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar mission. It could have been extremely favorable to receive direct input from participants representing the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar mission as they most likely

would have solid, consistent patterns established, and could shed further light on specifics regarding what ESL teaching practices work best.

Suggestions for Future Research

Positively connect gospel and ESL teaching. As linguistic and TESOL professionals who have a unique interest in, or connection to the LDS faith, it is imperative that steps be taken which will help ensure that these missionaries can get the help that they need. Some ways that we might be able to help in this regard include providing simple, basic, quality lesson plans that can be used by the missionaries, without the requirement of a lot of resources. Another idea might be to develop a website which the missionaries (or their mission presidents) can freely access to find downloadable lesson plans, lesson ideas, and various materials. In fact, it had been my ultimate desire with this study to prepare a website to give future LDS missionaries the ESL teaching help that they need. However, due to the large workload included in just the gathering, sorting and analyzing of data alone, it became clear that such would not be a realistic expectation for the scope of this study. Thus, I include it as a highly suggested avenue for anyone wishing to pursue further the aid that can be given to LDS missionaries, especially with utilization of the organized insight that this study provides.

Based on the response data for this study, it is clear that many missionaries would appreciate if there is not a forced disconnect between the missionary, gospel focus, and the English language classes. It could be extremely beneficial for future work to help build quality bridges between the two focus realms, thus allowing missionaries to not feel that they are “wasting the Lord’s time” because they cannot introduce gospel-centered materials. Perhaps the website I suggested might also include well thought-out connections to gospel principles, many of which also teach basic neighborly attributes, healthy values, and wholesome morals (and, in

this sense, are not LDS specific, but beneficial to the general human populace). One way that such might be implemented is through the sharing of carefully placed Mormon Messages. These are short films, freely available online and also downloadable, which highlight good, positive messages of hope, encouragement, faith, forgiveness, and a plethora of other Christian values. Using Mormon Messages as an example, lesson plans could be centered on pedagogically sound language learning, in an order that is congruent to the latest findings in terms of academic superiority and quality. The language could be learned, but also tied in to this would be a basic principle of the gospel, one that can leave the students feeling linguistically educated, as well as spiritually fed. This is an example of how connections and bridges can be built to tie in the gospel-centered themes and lessons, with quality language learning for the students.

Broaden the scope of participants. It was made expressly clear that desired participants for this research should have returned from their missions within the last ten years. However, one respondent served his mission from 1980 to 1982. This respondent is evidently an outlier. In considering whether or not to exclude his responses from the data, I noticed that he actually provided some very valuable insight, and perhaps added a greater measure of depth to this study. Many of the concerns, problems and issues that he highlighted are the exact concerns and issues that others noted. Thus, a suggestion for further research could be to conduct another study that looks at response data, similar to the qualitative nature of this study, but from a broader timespan than ten years. Perhaps a comparative study between various years or decades could also provide valuable insight.

Correlate geographically specific data. While this study recognized the different geographical locations represented in the respondent data received, it did not utilize the information as a variable to do geographically based analyses. No efforts were made to combine

and correlate the data received with their specific geographical locations. In the future, it could be beneficial to relate responses with the areas that the respondents served their missions, thus helping to display any patterns or trends that may be specific to certain areas. This could also be beneficial for knowing where and how to target specific area needs in order to refine and improve them.

Explore the history—Christian and LDS. Not a lot of attention was given to the historical details of early missionaries, and the history of ESL teaching among LDS missionaries. A potential area for further research could include looking at some more of the historical aspects of ESL teaching, particularly as they pertain to LDS missionaries, or even the LDS Church as a whole. A lot of excellent research has already been done regarding some historical aspects of LDS language teaching, for example, the thesis work by Cynthia Leah Hallen, entitled *LDS Language Teaching and Learning: Highlights from 1830 to 1982*. However, more specific and perhaps a more recent historical study could provide an update on some other aspects of LDS teaching, either full-time missionary specific or otherwise, and how that relates to ESL teaching.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to delve into the general Christian history of ESL teaching, and compare similarities and differences between the general Christian and the LDS specific ESL teaching among missionaries. For example, briefly touched on in the literature review was the fact that there seems to have been a massive global silence surrounding the issues of ESL teaching and Christian evangelism; it's almost like a taboo topic. An interesting area for future study could investigate more detail regarding this. Why has there been so much silence surrounding this topic? Has that silence affected the progress and refinement of ESL teaching missionaries in a positive or a negative way? What can be done to help break the silence in a meaningful and beneficial manner?

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Appendix A

Complete list of questions asked during stage one interviews.

Where did you serve your full-time LDS mission?

When?

How often did you teach ESL (i.e. the English language)?

What was the size of classes? (Was there a lot of variance? Was there a common average?)

What materials did you use?

Consistency? I.e. how consistent were you with your teaching, and how often you offered classes?

What were the approximate ages of your students?

Nationalities? I.e. where were your students from?

Were they usually beginners in terms of English language proficiency? If not, what proficiency level(s) did you teach?

Did you teach all proficiency levels together, or did you separate them into different classes, based on their language levels?

Implemented gospel teaching/missionary focused material?

Highly supported from mission presidency, headquarters, etc.? (or, initiated by you as missionary companions only)?

What was effective, what worked, and what didn't work?

Location? I.e. where were the classes held? E.g. in LDS Church buildings, in member homes, etc.

Any lesson plans/materials you still have? (If yes, may I get a copy or a reference to a copy)?

What was your main focus/why were you teaching ESL? Did you feel it was effective?

Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

Is there anything you wish you had done better?

If you could offer any advice to new missionaries going out, with regard to their English language teaching, what would it be?

Is there anything else that you wish to share?

May I contact you in the near future for a few more details?

Appendix B

The Qualtrics survey questionnaire used in stage two.

Missionary English Language Teaching Survey

Default Question Block

Q1. Informed Consent Form

This study aims to collect information from a variety of recently returned LDS missionaries (returned within the last 8 years) who taught English language classes on their missions, to people learning English. We will be looking at emerging patterns from the collected data that help indicate what missionaries are currently doing in their ESL/EFL (English as a second or foreign language) teaching practices, what is effective, what is not, and how we can help improve and refine these practices for the future.

NOTE: Please do not complete this survey unless you fit into the appropriate category; i.e. you are returned missionary, you returned within the last 8 years, and you taught English language classes (big or small) while on your mission.

Implied Consent

This research study is being conducted by Rachel Smith at Brigham Young University to determine what ESL teaching practices LDS missionaries currently use and find most effective. Also involved in this study is faculty mentor Dr. Lynn Henrichsen, who is a professor in the Linguistics department of BYU. You were invited to participate because you are a returned LDS missionary who taught volunteer ESL classes on your mission.

Your participation in this study will require the completion of the attached Qualtrics survey. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. You can choose to participate anonymously. If you choose not to be anonymous, you may be contacted again in the future for some follow up questions pertaining to this study, unless you specifically indicate that you do not want to be contacted further. You will not be paid for being in this study. This survey involves minimal risk to you. The benefits, however, may help increase knowledge about what ESL teaching practices LDS missionaries currently use and find most effective, and how future ESL teaching missionaries can improve their teaching practices.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem you may contact me, Rachel Smith at stand4light@hotmail.com or my advisor, Professor Lynn Henrichsen at lynn_Henrichsen@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator at A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu; (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached survey. Thank you!

Q2. I have read and understood the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Yes

No

—

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q3. Which LDS mission did you serve in? (include area and country)

Q4. What was the most common language (or languages) spoken where you served?

Q5. What year(s) did you serve?

Q6. As a missionary, how often did you teach ESL? (Note: ESL is an abbreviation for English as a Second Language, or in other words, English language classes.)

Q7. What was the average size of your classes (i.e. how many students attended)?

Q8. Where did you teach the English classes? (e.g. LDS Churches, member homes, local town halls, etc.)

Q9. What was the main purpose for your ESL teaching?

Q10. Did you find ESL teaching effective to your purpose? Why/why not?

Q11. In your opinion, what teaching practices were effective? (e.g. teaching strategies that you used, certain games, class management, etc... anything that stands out in your mind as

having been a clearly effective method for helping you be good ESL teachers).

Note: Please be as specific and detailed as possible.

Q12. What teaching practices were ineffective?

Note: Please be as specific and detailed as possible.

Q13. Who initiated the practice of teaching English language classes in your mission? (e.g. mission presidency, headquarters, previous missionaries, or you and your companion?)

Q14. In your opinion, how well were your English language teaching efforts supported by your various leaders and any people involved?

	Not Supported At All	Very Minimal Support	Somewhat Supported	Well Supported	Very Strongly Supported
the LDS Church headquarters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the MTC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
your mission president	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
district and zone leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fellow missionaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
local LDS Church LEADERS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
local LDS Church MEMBERS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not Supported At All	Very Minimal Support	Somewhat Supported	Well Supported	Very Strongly Supported
the local community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
investigators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15. What materials did you normally use to help you teach ESL?

Q16. How effective did you find each of these materials that you used? (Please be specific and detailed).

Q17. Did you use gospel-teaching / missionary-focused material when teaching English? If yes, what were they?

Q18. Why did you (or did you not) choose to use gospel-teaching / missionary-focused materials in your English classes?

Q19. Overall, how much did you enjoy teaching English as a missionary?

	Not at all.	A little bit.	Somewhat (50/50).	Very much.	I absolutely loved it!
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20. What caused you to feel this way about English language teaching? (Please be specific.)

Q21. Is there anything else you wish to share about your English teaching experience as a missionary?

Q22. May I contact you in the near future for more details? (If yes, please include your name and contact information here).