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International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching

Volume 1 (March 2014)

edited by Michael Lessard-Clouston & Xuesong (Andy) Gao

The editors extend their appreciation to all the referees who volunteered their time and expertise in reading, interacting with, and evaluating the manuscripts they received.

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
About the <i>IJC&ELT</i>	ii
Information for Contributors	iii
Editorial: Welcome to the <i>IJC&ELT</i> ! Michael Lessard-Clouston & Xuesong (Andy) Gao	1
Articles	
The History, Nature and Future of Faith-informed Research in English Language Teaching Mary Shepard Wong	6
Nonnative English-speaking Teachers' Self-perceived Language Proficiency Levels, Anxieties, and Learning Strategies Hiromi Takahashi	24
Faith and Pedagogy: Five Voices from Japan Paul Wicking	45
Is English a Force for Good or Bad? Kitty B. Purgason	60
Forum	
Addressing Reconciliation in the ESL Classroom Michael K. Westwood	82
Reviews	
<i>Christian Faith and English Language Teaching and Learning</i> Mary Shepard Wong, Carolyn Kristjánsson, and Zoltán Dörnyei (Eds.) Reviewed by Jan Edwards Dormer	93
<i>Every Tribe and Tongue</i> Michael Pasquale and Nathan L. K. Bierma Reviewed by William Acton	99
<i>Teaching English in Missions</i> Jan Edwards Dormer Reviewed by Marilyn Lewis	101

About the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching (IJC&ELT)* is the official journal of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see <http://celea.wildapricot.org/>) and is supported by the Department of Applied Linguistics & TESOL at Biola University (<http://cook.biola.edu/programs/linguistics-tesol/>). It publishes articles and reviews related to English Language Teaching (ELT), with a perspective of particular interest to Christians, and specifically Christian English language educators.

The mandate of *IJC&ELT* (ISSN 2334-1866, online) includes the following aims:

- to publish articles and reviews related to ELT, using a Christian perspective
- to stimulate the integration of the Christian faith and learning and teaching in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- to encourage and thus promote critical reflection, discussion, engaging theory, excellent research, and inspirational practice in applied linguistics and TESOL
- to provide an international approach to English language teaching and research
- to offer an open access forum that shares knowledge and applies high academic standards, including double blind peer review

As an international publication, the *IJC&ELT* recognizes that there are diverse Christian traditions and perspectives throughout the world and it therefore welcomes articles and reviews that deal with and address different Christian traditions and their connections to English language teaching. The main readership, however, is CELEA members, who themselves come from and bring a range of Christian perspectives to their work in ELT.

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Information for Contributors

Aims and Scope

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* (ISSN 2334-1866, online) is an international peer reviewed open access journal that publishes quality empirical, practical, review, and theoretical papers covering a broad range of issues in English language teaching and research. *IJC&ELT* is thus an interdisciplinary forum, publishing both original research and teaching articles, as well as stimulating reflections and reviews of interest to Christians and others in TESOL. It aims to provide an international forum for established and emerging teachers, researchers, and others committed to ELT from a Christian point of view.

Audience

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is primarily intended for use in the academic community, especially for members of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see <http://celea.wildapricot.org/> or <http://www.celea.net>), its sponsor. Yet *IJC&ELT*'s interdisciplinary nature also makes it accessible and of interest to educators of various types (including teacher trainers and those working with English language learners), curriculum developers and materials writers, Christian organizations concerned about language issues, and other interested practitioners, researchers, and theorists.

Focus and Format

With the above audience and policies below in mind, the focus of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is primarily on, though not restricted to, the following areas of inquiry, practice, and thinking in English language teaching:

- applied linguistics and language and culture learning and teaching
- classroom and other best practices in TESOL
- design and development of EFL/EIL/ELL/ESL/ESP curricula and materials
- ELT skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and methodologies
- innovations in teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language
- TESOL teacher education, research, and training
- theory and practice in second/foreign language learning and teaching

As an international publication whose primary audience is Christian English language educators and other interested parties, all contributions should approach the focus or topic at hand recognizing a Christian point of view, though readers realize that this may be more detailed or obvious in some cases and yet may appear less so in other instances. Submissions may be drawn from relevant presentations (CELT or other conferences, for example) or reflect classroom practices, research, or reviews of potential interest to *IJC&ELT* readers.

The journal includes four distinct sections:

Articles – reports of empirical studies, review papers or meta-analyses, theoretical position papers, etc. These should not exceed 7,000 words, including references.

In the Classroom – descriptions of teaching activities or techniques, classroom action research, etc., within a relevant theoretical framework, not to exceed 4,000 words.

Forum – position papers or reactions to articles or reviews, opinion or viewpoint articles, or reports, interviews, or commentary on current topics of interest. These submissions should also not exceed 4,000 words, including references.

Reviews – evaluative book, materials, and software reviews relevant to *IJC&ELT* readers. These will not usually exceed 1,500 words, including references.

Policies

In order to reach the widest readership possible, the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is published online through the *IJC&ELT* website (<http://cook.biola.edu/publications/ijcelt/>), where editorials, articles, reviews, and other relevant communications are freely downloadable in the form of PDF files. CELEA members, libraries, or other readers may print out the complete issue file for themselves. If there is interest and demand, in the future we may offer hard copy issues through a print-on-demand publisher.

Given that the focus is English language teaching, the language of the journal is English. Initially the frequency of issues will be one per year, with the hope that this may increase, assuming a sufficient quantity of quality contents that pass blind peer review. Preference will be given to articles and reviews that make clear, helpful, and fresh contributions to the field of ELT within a Christian perspective, broadly conceived. Articles, advertisements, and reviews do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of the editors, editorial review board, or CELEA. Submissions may be made by readers around the world. Accepted papers and reviews will be approved by the editors and at least two additional readers, as appropriate for the *IJC&ELT* based on their contributions, originality, and relevance.

Articles and reviews shall conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA style, 6th ed.). Authors who publish in the *IJC&ELT* retain copyright of their work, enabling the unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction of their article or review in any medium, provided that they formally cite the original publication in the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*.

Manuscripts must not have been previously published or currently submitted for review at another journal. Authors should inform the editors if related research or a similar version of their manuscript has been published or is under consideration elsewhere. Authors will not be paid for articles or reviews; neither will they be charged publication fees. Authors, like readers, may freely download and print as many copies of their work in *IJC&ELT* as desired.

Submissions

Contributions should be in the form of Word documents submitted at IJCandELT@gmail.com. Manuscripts which do not conform to the guidelines in the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition, 2010) may not be sent for external review. The *IJC&ELT* welcomes articles from both native- and non-native English speakers, yet requests that ideas in submissions be expressed clearly for a broad, international audience. Authors are responsible for fluent language use, as well as for the accuracy of any data, references, or citations they incorporate into their work. Obtaining permission to incorporate any previously copyrighted material is the author's responsibility. The editors reserve the right to make minor editing changes without prior consultation with authors. Major editing or revisions, however, will only be done in consultation with authors.

Please see *IJC&ELT*'s website, <http://cook.biola.edu/publications/ijcelt/>, for the latest information about the journal. We value your contributions, prayers, and readership.



Editorial: Welcome to the *IJC&ELT*!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. In this first editorial we would like to summarize the history of this new publication, explain how it has come about, and introduce you to ourselves and to this volume.

Beginnings

For the last decade, I (Michael) have attended Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) conferences (see Wong's article in this issue for more on CELT). There I noticed that the only people who benefitted from the great talks, research, and discussions at those wonderful events were those in attendance. I asked others about potentially creating a periodical where presenters might submit and perhaps publish article versions of their conference contributions, in order to reach a larger audience. Without exception, everyone thought it was a grand idea.

At the American Association for Applied Linguistics conference in Costa Mesa, California (AAAL 2007), I spoke with Tom Scovel and Zoltán Dörnyei about this journal possibility, and they were encouraging but said that they could not take on such a new venture. As I shared this update with my friend Xuesong (Andy) Gao at a small Chinese restaurant during AAAL 2007, over some great noodles he challenged me to start the journal myself. I told Andy I would think and pray about it, but I could not imagine doing so alone. At the time I co-edited the *CETC Newsletter*, published by TESOL, and I responded then that it was my priority.

After TESOL closed all its caucuses in 2008, including the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC), the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA) was formed and it became clear that a new venue for communication was necessary, so I founded *CELEA News*, another newsletter. It has published two issues a year since 2009¹ and fills an important role for regular communication with CELEA members. Sometimes I invited CELT presenters to write short versions of their presentations for the newsletter, but it really had no space for longer research or theory pieces, and my desire grew to help others to access some of the riches from those conferences. Later I asked Andy if he would co-edit a journal with me for CELEA, and he thankfully agreed. After several volumes of *CELEA News*, I was able to pass the lead on the newsletter to my co-editor Jan Dormer, so that I could focus on founding this journal.

¹ Visit <http://celea.wildapricot.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1636494>.

Yet how does one create a journal with no funds, no release time from work, and no technical expertise? In our case one prays, talks with valued mentors and colleagues, asks for some favours, tries some creative things, and works hard! It is wonderful that two editors on different continents are able to work largely electronically, via email and Skype, in addition to conference meetings. After Michael's dean at Biola agree to help fund initial web pages for the journal, we drafted and got feedback on a proposal for the journal, which we then sent to about two dozen potentially interested folks (including all those Michael had spoken with earlier at conferences over the years). This step proved to be very helpful, since it enabled us to clarify our aims and led to the title we chose. We were then able to use the proposal to prepare information for potential contributors, and put that online. One version of that information is available in the front matter for this issue (pp. ii-iv), which we encourage you to read when you find time.

With such information available online we started to receive manuscripts and invited colleagues, graduate students, and others to read our guidelines and consider submitting something. As our "about" page (p. ii) makes clear, we hope to engender some thoughtful contributions and discussions, especially among Christians working in English language teaching (ELT), but we also want to do so in a robust manner that will withstand the scrutiny usually applied to scholarly academic and professional publications. This means we are grateful to the 17 members of our editorial review board, as well as half a dozen others, who responded to our requests to read and evaluate the various contributions we received. All of those included here have gone through several versions, and in some cases several reviews, before acceptance. To be honest, we had hoped for a larger first issue, but we want to start somewhere and are pleased with Volume 1. We know that there are other potential contributions in the works, as well, since a number of those we considered and responded to received "revise and resubmit" decisions.

A refereed journal like this one means that all of the articles were evaluated by the editors and approved by two or more additional specialists related to the area being addressed. We rejected a number of submissions, some of which were not really appropriate and others that were simply not ready for publication for various reasons. We hope that some submissions we dealt with will be improved, rewritten, resubmitted, and may be accepted in the future. As Jan Dormer notes in her review in this issue, doing research and publishing it is difficult. We thus applaud all the contributors to this issue and express our appreciation for their work in getting the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* off to a wonderful start.

In This Inaugural Issue

We chose the title for this *journal* because we hope that it will become truly *international*, and publish a range of empirical, practical, review, and theoretical articles related to the learning and *teaching* of *English*, yet with a *Christian* perspective in mind. We are thus delighted that the lead article in this issue comes from a plenary talk by Mary Wong at the CELT 2013 conference in Dallas, Texas. As Wong discusses the history, nature, and possible future of faith-informed research in English language teaching, we believe it is a fitting way to begin this inaugural volume. In answering a number of helpful questions, Wong's survey offers CELEA members insights into the background of the association and challenges *IJC&ELT* readers to sustain Christian ELT research and to nurture and contribute to further areas needing exploration.

The next article, by Hiromi Takahashi, presents research on nonnative English-speaking teachers' (NNESTs) self-perceived language proficiency levels, anxieties, and learning strategies. Drawing on data from an online survey, Takahashi considers some of the challenges NNESTs face in their work, as well as some possibilities. Of particular interest to us was how she brings potential Christian perspectives, including her own, to these topics. The following article by Paul Wicking considers faith and pedagogy, reporting on an interview study conducted with five Christian teachers in Japan. Wicking shows how individual teachers approached their work, and how they created meaning of their faith and pedagogy, yet largely without overt evangelism in their classes. Our final main article by Kitty Purgason also reports on a survey, but this time concerning student and teacher views of English, and whether it is a force for good or ill. Purgason connects her results to the literature on this topic and indicates how positive effects of English and ELT might be encouraged while potentially negative ones may be countered.

We include one shorter article in our "Forum" section, by Michael Westwood on reconciliation in the ESL classroom. Westwood discusses why this topic is of interest both to teachers and students who are Christian and those who are not, and then briefly considers some ways that this issue might be addressed in ESL/EFL classes. Although we do not have any short "In the Classroom" contributions to include in this initiatory volume, we do want to draw your attention to this category of potential submissions, which focus on teaching activities, techniques, or classroom action research (see our Information for Contributors if you would like to send us something for that section). We hope to receive some of these submissions and to mentor authors so that their work in this area may appear in future volumes of *IJC&ELT*.

This volume ends with three reviews of books that we believe will be of interest to CELEA members and *IJC&ELT* readers. Jan Dormer's review is actually much longer than we normally expect, but since it discusses the very first collection of empirical research on Christian faith and ELT we are delighted to include it and bring the contents of this important work edited by Mary Wong, Carolyn Kristjánsson, and Zoltán Dörnyei to readers' attention. (Full disclosure: Michael has a chapter in that book under review.) Next Bill Acton evaluates Michael Pasquale and Nathan Bierma's *Every Tribe and Tongue*, which discusses a biblical vision for language in society. Lastly, Marilyn Lewis discusses Jan Dormer's *Teaching English in Missions*. These key books being reviewed touch on various topics relevant to Christian professionals in ELT.

Acknowledgements and Appreciations

A publication like this takes a global village. We thank each person who submitted something for inclusion here, and acknowledge our important reviewers who offered their time and expertise gratis. We appreciate their mentoring not only the authors whose work appears here, but also those whose submissions did not make the cut (yet). We are grateful to Biola University's Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL for providing support to Michael, as well as for the funds and platform to provide online information about the journal and to publish the first volume on the web. For this we must recognize Michael's Dean in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Dr. Douglas Pennoyer. Thank you for believing in this work! We also thank all the mentors and scholars who listened to our ideas and later gave us feedback on the journal proposal which eventually led to this *IJC&ELT*. We hope you enjoy the results. A final note of gratitude must be expressed to Daniel McClary, who volunteered his time and talents to work with us to design the *IJC&ELT* logo and cover page. Thank you for your efforts, Daniel!

An Invitation

We invite you to read, reflect on, and potentially respond to the contributions in this initial volume of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. Please feel free to contact either us or the article authors and book reviewers by email. We hope to start some good dialogue and discussion, as well as to encourage you in your work. Please feel free to email us your reactions to this issue and to suggest potential topics or materials that you would like to see included in future volumes. If you have written something relevant that you

received good feedback on, you might read the Information for Contributors (pp. iii-iv) and then consider revising it to submit for possible future publication. We value your interest and support!

Moving forward, the *IJC&ELT* needs to develop a more sophisticated submission and reviewing platform, and we covet your prayers for this to happen (as well as for the funds to enable it). If you would like to volunteer to help proofread manuscripts, or offer some computer or other service we might require, please contact us. This inaugural issue is really just a start, but we are grateful for what God seems to be doing. Please help us as we build on this humble beginning, through your prayer support, submissions to the journal, and by reading and sharing it with colleagues, students, and others you know who might find it useful. To God be the glory!

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About the *IJC&ELT* Editors

Michael Lessard-Clouston (Ph.D., Toronto) is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in La Mirada, California, U.S.A. He has worked in ESL/EFL and applied linguistics for over 25 years, including teaching in Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, and the United States. He edited a special Japan issue (1998) of *Language, Culture and Curriculum* when it was published by Multilingual Matters, is author of *Specialized Vocabulary Learning and Use in Theology* (Lambert Academic, 2009) and *Teaching Vocabulary* (TESOL International Association, 2013), and his most recent article contributions have appeared in *Asian ESP Journal*, *CALR Linguistics Journal*, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *The CATESOL Journal*, and *The Linguistics Journal*. His research interests include corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, faith and learning integration, intercultural communication, second language acquisition, and vocabulary learning and teaching. More about Michael and his work is available online at <http://biola.academia.edu/MichaelLessardClouston>.



Xuesong (Andy) Gao (Ph.D., Hong Kong) is an Associate Professor in the Division of English Language Education within the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. He has lived and worked in Belgium, China, Hong Kong, and the U.K., and his articles have appeared in many publications, including *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, *ELT Journal*, *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Language Teaching Research*, *Modern Language Journal*, and *TESOL Quarterly*, among others. He is author of *Strategic Language Learning: The Roles of Agency and Context* (2010), co-editor of *Identity, Motivation and Autonomy in Language Learning* (2011, both Multilingual Matters), and co-author of *Language Teacher Education in a Multilingual Context: Experiences from Hong Kong* (2014, Springer). He is co-editor of the journal *System* (Elsevier), and his research interests include higher education, language learning strategies, learner autonomy, sociolinguistics, and teacher development. For more on Andy and his work, visit http://web.edu.hku.hk/academic_staff.php?staffId=xsgao.



The History, Nature and Future of Faith-Informed Research in English Language Teaching¹

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Abstract

Although scholarship on Christian faith and education is well established (see Bleistein, Wong, & Smith, 2013), research of Christian faith and English language teaching (ELT) is just starting to emerge. As the recent volume edited by Wong, Kristjánsson, and Dörnyei (2013) demonstrated, what started as a debate on the dilemmas of imperialism in Christian missions (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009a), “has enlarged to include empirical studies that demonstrate the importance of faith to the motivation of language learners, the impact of faith on ELT pedagogical approaches, and the significance of faith for teachers’ professional identity formations” (Bleistein, Wong, & Smith 2013, p. 236). This article traces some of the roots of scholarship on Christian faith and ELT, reflects on the nature of faith-informed research, discusses how this area of inquiry has been developed, and identifies areas ripe for further research in faith and ELT. It concludes by noting the benefits and obstacles encountered in research on faith and ELT and offers suggestions regarding its future.

Key words: ELT, CELT, CELEA, Christianity, faith, research

Tapping into the Roots of Scholarship on Christianity and Language Learning

Scholarship on the interrelationship of language and Christian faith is both deep and wide, going back in time and reaching across many disciplines. In the account of creation in Genesis 1, God *spoke* the world into existence. Several accounts in scripture reveal aspects of the interconnection of God and language from the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), Pentecost (Acts 2), to the declaration that every nation, tribe, people and language will stand before the throne (Revelation 7). Scholars throughout history have explored the connections of Christian faith and education and some have written specifically about faith and foreign language teaching such as Comenius, a 17th century Bishop (see Murphy, 1995; Howatt, 2004). It can be said of Comenius that one need not update his teaching, only translate it, which attests to the relevance of his seminal work that considered the spiritual nature of students and the spiritual aspects of the task of foreign language learning and teaching. Other scholars such as Lull and Bacon also made a

¹ This article is based in part on the plenary address “Creating and Sustaining Research on Christian Faith and ELT” presented at the Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT 2013) Conference, Dallas Baptist University, Texas, U.S.A., March 20, 2013.

connection of Christian faith to language pedagogy (see Smith, 1996, 2000). Consider also the thousands of missionaries and Bible translators, including those in SIL International², who over the past few centuries have devoted their lives to Bible translation. Their work and experiences have much to say about the connections of languages and faith (e.g., Makoni & Makoni, 2009).

Research on language teaching and faith needs to be informed by and draw upon these deep roots to enhance our understanding of the history of the intersections of faith and ELT. But in addition to these deep roots that go back in time, there are also “wide roots” that span several disciplines, potentially enriching our research on faith and ELT. Scholarship within Christian higher education on the connections of faith and learning is extensive. Since 1970, more than 9,000 articles related to faith and learning have been published in Christian peer-reviewed journals (Bleistein, Wong, & Smith, 2013, p. 235). It is important to be aware of the relevant conversations and findings on faith and learning in related disciplines that extend outside the fields of applied linguistics and TESOL³. Research and scholarship on faith and language teaching needs to acknowledge and draw from both classic work related to our discipline and more recent scholarship outside our discipline in order to achieve more informed and nuanced understandings.

Although the scholarship on faith and learning is well established, discussions in the literature of the interconnections of Christian faith and the field of English language teaching did not begin to emerge until the 1990's. In response to Stevick's (1990) book, *Humanism in Language Teaching*, a discussion called “Keeping the Faith” between Stevick (1997) and Edge (1996a, 1996b) appeared in *TESOL Matters*. Other publications problematizing the connections of ELT and missions soon followed, most notably Phillipson's (1992) often cited book *Linguistic Imperialism*. In the first decade of the 21st century several publications taking a positive view of the connections of faith and ELT appeared including the seminal books by Smith and Carvill (2000) and Snow (2001). A few articles also appeared supporting the role of faith such as McCarthy (2000), Tennant (2002), Scovel (2004), and Purgason (2004). Publications with a

² SIL International is a global Christian non-profit organization that studies lesser-known languages.

³ Space does not allow for a description of the salient findings in related disciplines here, but see Bleistein, Wong, and Smith (2013) for lists of references of scholarship that fall under 14 related disciplines or subcategories of: 1. Christian thought and research, 2. education (post-secondary), 3. education (primary and secondary), 4. intercultural communication, 5. identity and experience, 6. language, 7. learning and learners, 8. materials and resources, 9. missions, evangelism and global Christianity, 10. pedagogy, 11. religion, 12. spirituality, 13. teacher education, 14. values, ethics, and social justice.

more critical view of faith and teaching surfaced during this decade as well, highlighting the connections that Christian missions have with imperialism, colonialism, and neo-liberal agendas. These publications include Vandrick (2002), Yeoman (2002), Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003), Edge (2003), and Johnston (2003) among others⁴.

Two recent and relevant publications on faith and ELT in major academic journals include Baurain (2007) and Varghese and Johnston (2007). Smith's ongoing work in this area includes a notable (2008) article focusing on the learner as a spiritual being, as well as dozens of other articles, many appearing in the journal launched in 2000, the *Journal of Christianity and Foreign Languages*, as well as those published in mainstream academic journals. A collection of 30 chapters which brought together 15 evangelicals, and 15 non-evangelicals to discuss the tensions and dilemmas among Christian and critical language educators can be found in a Routledge volume (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009a). This anthology is written in a chapter and response format providing a series of articles followed by a set of responses, gathering many of the authors mentioned above (Julian Edge, Bill Johnston, Alastair Pennycook, Robert Phillipson, Stephanie Vandrick, Manka Varghese, Don Snow, David Smith, Earl Stevick) and several other luminaries in the field (including Zoltan Dörnyei, Dana Ferris, Brian Morgan, Ryuko Kubota, Douglas Brown, and Andy Curtis) in an attempt to dialogue on these issues. Stevick (2009) notes in the afterword that balancing honest confidence and appropriate diffidence is essential in this discussion, which readers of the volume may note was not always easy for the contributors to do. Other relevant books published in the last five years addressing faith and teaching include Romanowski and McCarthy (2009), Smith (2009a), Dormer (2011), Smith and Smith (2011), and Pasquale and Bierma (2011). These works mainly discuss how Christian faith relates to pedagogy and practice providing a much-needed discussion of practical applications of faith and teaching.

Towards a Definition of Faith-Informed Research

But what is also needed in addition to (and not instead of) this scholarship on faith⁵ and practice, are empirically based studies that complement these discussions and provide a foundation and theoretical framework that can inform our thinking and practice. Establishing an

⁴ For a more detailed description of this history, see Wong, Dörnyei, and Kristjánsson (2013).

⁵ "Faith" in this paper refers to Christianity unless noted otherwise. However, readers should also consider how other faiths, such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, etc., might affect one's scholarship and research.

empirical base will not replace non-empirical scholarship, nor will it likely persuade most non-believers of the importance and relevance that faith has on language teaching. The value of faith-informed empirical research is in its potential to build theory, inform practice, explore God's created world, and respond to God's calling on one's life. The following discussion of faith-informed research will center around eight questions that I will attempt to answer briefly.

1. Are religion and research incompatible?

Scores of Christian scholars have written about the tensions inherent in faith-informed scholarship and the difficulties of the intentional blending of one's faith and one's discipline. As far back as the second century when the North African theologian Tertullian asked "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" the relationship of human learning and the Christian faith has been problematized. Canagarajah (2013) notes that for some people, "faith and research perhaps do not go together" (p. xxi). But he suggests that we reexamine the assumptions of "value free" research. Canagarajah contends that the dichotomy of faith as subjective, committed, and absolute, while research is viewed as objective, skeptical and context-sensitive, does not mean that faith and research are in opposition. Values-based researchers such as Christians, much like post-positivist researchers, base the reliability of their research upon other principles than "objectivity," such as making research practices and assumptions transparent; triangulating findings through multiple data sources; disciplined data collection and recording; rigorous, repeated, and close analysis of data; as well as interpretation from diverse angles. Thus faith-informed researchers and post-positivist researchers can find commonality, not incompatibility, in the way they approach the research process.

2. In what ways might faith inform research?

Marsden (1997) notes that religious faith can have a bearing on scholarship in four ways: motivation to do one's work well, the applications for one's scholarship, questions one asks and topics one studies, and the wider implication of one's scholarship and its assumptions on larger issues and perspectives. Marsden suggests that Christians must come ready to play by the rules of the academic game, but not hesitate to be vocal about the influence of their faith on their work. He adds that although Scripture will inform one's perspectives, "the trump card" of special revelation cannot be played on the table of the academy, as all players must agree to the sources

of authority. These comments highlight that faith informs both why and what one researches, as well as how one engages in it and who it benefits.

3. In what ways might research inform faith?

Noll (2011) contends that scholarly pursuits are part of the command to love God with our minds and states “for believers to be studying created things is to be studying the words of Christ” (p. 25). To fully know Christ, we must study his creation, thus Noll (1994, 2011) pleads for greater intellectual involvement of evangelicals and implies that there is a Christian way of knowing and thinking. Noll (2011) argues that the careful study of creation and of our disciplines will reflect the creator. He cites Colossians 1:15-16, “Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and for him.” To apply this to linguistics, we can see in its complexity, diversity, order, creative essence, immensity and potential reflections of the nature of Christ. Noll believes that the motive of all learning is to know Christ, and that teaching about Christ provides powerful motivations for serious scholarship. “In sum,” Noll (2011) concludes, “to confess Christ is to make an extraordinarily strong statement about the value of studying the things Christ has made” (p. 26). This means that not only does faith inform one’s research, but also one’s research can inform one’s faith.

4. Why avoid the term Christian research?

Although there may not be such a thing as “Roman Catholic chemistry or Aryan biology” (Marsden, 1997, p. 60), it cannot be denied that our faith beliefs and worldview impact what we research, the way we research, and whom our research benefits. However it must be stated clearly, that there is surely not one single way that faith informs research. The term “faith-informed” is used instead of “Christian” intentionally, because as Marsden (1997) notes it might be best to refer to one’s scholarship with more modesty (p. 67) while identifying oneself as a Christian, as there is not just one Christian way to engage in scholarship or research. Faith-informed research will take on myriads of forms as each person seeks to apply their own understanding of their faith and what they believe God has called them to do, and as Marsden (1997) notes, it will “defy classification and easy formulae” (p. 70).

5. *Why distinguish faith-informed research from faith-informed scholarship?*

The literature on faith and learning does not often make a distinction between faith-informed *scholarship* and faith-informed *empirical research*, but for the purposes of this discussion, such a distinction would be helpful. Scholarship that explores and articulates the theoretical underpinnings of Christian faith and ELT practice is needed, to be sure. And this type of scholarship may involve integrating and applying what has been found in the thousands of articles and books on faith and learning published in recent decades. But what is also needed is a body of empirical studies on faith and language teaching that would help to more firmly establish Christian faith and ELT as a legitimate area of inquiry and better inform our practice. Thus seeking to define and identify faith-informed research as different from scholarship might be helpful.

6. *What would disqualify research from being faith-informed?*

Three things would disqualify research from being considered faith-informed: unethical practices (such as putting participants at risk), dishonest procedures (such as falsifying data), and substandard research (such as inaccurate or sloppy procedures in data collection or analysis). Ethical research is that which follows the guidelines of international review boards in terms how one treats participants (ensuring that their risk is minimized, they are protected, and their identity is concealed). Related to ethical procedures is honesty in providing an accurate account of the data, not concealing or falsifying data to promote one's interests. Thus unethical procedures or dishonest practices would disqualify research from being considered faith-informed because they violate the Christian values of dignity for human life and honesty in interactions (which are not unique to the Christian faith, but are core values found in scripture). Some may argue that our research will be imperfect as we are imperfect, but Christians should strive to conduct excellent research as far as can be managed in our limited understanding as we seek to be a witness for Christ and do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23).

7. *What would qualify research as faith-informed?*

Research is systematic inquiry which aims to enhance the understanding of that which is being studied and includes the identification of a question, the collection and analysis of data, and the dissemination of the findings. Faith-informed research is distinctive in the following ways: in the identification of a question (faith informs the "what," the topic or subject under

inquiry even if it is not about faith), the collection and analysis of data (faith affects the “how,” the way it is studied including ethical precautions, the lenses that are used in analysis, and the integrity of data collection, recording, and reporting), the dissemination of the findings (faith informs the “who,” in terms of who the study benefits and who has access), and the wider implications and purposes of the research (faith informs the “so what,” the practical implications the research may have). I contend that faith-informed research from a Christian perspective is research in which the majority of the decisions are made with the intentional application of one’s understanding of Biblical values and God’s calling on one’s life. While the researcher may not have been mindful or intentional in aligning every research decision with their faith beliefs, the extent that they make such a connection at each phase of the research process, or can provide justification upon further reflection, is a key indicator that it is faith-informed.

8. Can atheists conduct Christian faith-informed research?

Consider research that is about faith but is conducted by those who do not believe in the existence of God. What about research that leads to the greater good, such as more equitable distribution of educational resources to a group of previously underserved students? And what if this research is conducted ethically and to the highest standard of excellence? I contend it would not be considered faith-informed if the researchers did not have faith beliefs to apply. All research is informed by a particular worldview, and there is no neutral, value-free approach, but in order for research to be informed from a Christian perspective, the researcher would need to hold and seek to live out Christian values. Research by an atheist is informed by an atheist worldview, and not by a religious faith, so it would not qualify as being informed from a Christian faith.

The objective of this discussion is *not* to apply a reductionist approach to label others’ research as faith-informed or not, but rather to become more aware of the complexity of the process of allowing faith to inform research. Instead of searching for a litmus test to identify faith-informed research, we might instead be more aware of the many ways that the process and products of our work glorify God or deny his presence and purpose in our lives. Becoming more mindful of the many decisions we make that either confirm our faith beliefs and values or deny them is crucial to this process. To put it succinctly, *faith-informed research involves awareness, understanding, and intent to apply what one understands to be God’s word and will to one’s*

work. The thousands of decisions made during the process of conceiving of and conducting research and writing it up for publication might fall on a wide continuum from faith-informed on one side to unexamined in the middle, to outright denial of one's understanding of biblical values on the other side. Thus identifying research as faith-informed is a complex task but begins with the question: *To what extent does what I am doing, the way I am doing it, why I'm doing it, and who it benefits align with my understanding of what God has revealed in scripture and creation and what I believe he has called me to do?*

Sustaining Research from the Margins and the Center

With the exception of the 11 data-driven research studies found in Wong, Kristjánsson, and Dörnyei (2013) and a few other notable exceptions including Varghese and Johnston (2007), Han (2009), and Lee (2012), most of the scholarship on Christian faith and ELT are monographs that do not report on empirical-based research studies. A body of scholarship that includes empirical studies on Christian faith and ELT may help to establish legitimacy of this area of inquiry within our field. While there are book reviews, opinion pieces, and other non-empirical articles in publications such as the former *CETC Newsletter* produced by the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC)⁶ within the professional organization of TESOL, and more recently in the *CELEA News* newsletters that are produced outside of the TESOL professional organization, what is needed to sustain *research* on faith and ELT are more data-based studies published in academic journals. Again, this is in addition to, not instead of non-empirical scholarship.

Teachers and scholars wishing to publish faith-informed research in academic journals have the following options: They can publish in the hundreds of secular journals related to education and ELT or publish in journals related to Christianity and education such as the following:

⁶ There are four distinct entities. CETC existed as a formal caucus within the TESOL organization for 11 years, from 1997-2008, and had elected leadership, bylaws, newsletters, a booth, and session slots at the annual convention. In 2008 when all seven caucuses were dissolved by the TESOL board, the non-profit Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see <http://www.celea.net/>) formed, which maintains a website and produces an electronic newsletter but currently has no formal relationship with the TESOL organization. In 2008, TESOL allowed a forum to meet at the convention in order to transition out of a caucus (and appease caucus members). However the Christian English Language Educators Forum (CELEF) is just a shadow of the former caucus, stripped of its formal status, sessions, booth, funding, and administrative support. TESOL has provided CELEF with one slot on the program until 2014, but that may be phased out. CELEA leadership organizes the CELEF. Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) is a grassroots group of educators whose main task is to promote and organize conferences, which it has done since 2004. Some people were/are active in all four entities, while others are active in just one or more. CELEA, CELEF, and CELT are currently active and supportive of each other in their unique roles.

- *Christian Educators Journal*
- *Christian Higher Education*
- *Christian Scholar's Review*
- *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*
- *Journal of Christian Education*
- *Journal of Christianity and Foreign Languages*
- *Journal of Education and Christian Belief*
- *Journal of Research on Christian Education*
- *Religion and Education*

Until recently, the only Christian journal related to the field of language education was the *Journal of Christianity and Foreign Languages*. However, with the launch of this inaugural issue, the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* provides an important venue to promote scholarship and research that specifically targets ELT and the Christian faith. Both of these options, publishing in secular *and* Christian journals, are important in order to sustain research in faith and ELT. Publication within the more widely circulated and highly esteemed academic journals is crucial in establishing a presence and gaining legitimacy, while publication within Christian journals provides more opportunities to speak to those within the Christian community and may increase one's likelihood of having an article accepted. Quite frankly, research on faith issues is sometimes shunned by the academic community and is viewed as irrelevant and/or inappropriate to some journal editors and reviewers. Providing a venue that is set aside for faith-informed research provides, as Canagarajah (2007, 2009) says, "a safe haven," while continuing to publish in the more competitive journals on the role of faith and ELT prevents Christians from appearing to hide, as Johnston (2009) claims evangelicals in ELT have been doing by publishing only within Christian publications and circles.

Although publications are essential to promote research, conferences are also valuable. The creation of and decade-long support for conferences on ELT and Christianity is due in large part to one individual, Kitty Purgason, who has mobilized others to host twelve successful Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) conferences. What started as a meeting in a church in Long Beach in 2004 is now an annual and sometimes international event⁷. The 9th

⁷ The following is a list of the past CELT conferences (and plenary speakers): 1) 2004 Long Beach, CA: 1st CELT conference (Tom Scovel), 2) 2006 Chiang Mai, Thailand: 1st international & 2nd CELT conference (Don Snow, Marilyn Lewis, and Alan Seaman), 3) 2006 San Francisco, 3rd CELT conference (no plenary speaker), 4) 2007 Seattle, WA: 4th CELT conference (Suresh Canagarajah & David Smith), 5) 2008 New York, NY: 5th CELT Conference (Zoltan Dörnyei), 6) 2009 Denver, CO: 6th CELT Conference (no plenary speaker), 7) 2010 Boston, MA: 7th CELT Conference (Dana Ferris), 8) 2012 Philadelphia, PA: 8th CELT Conference (Michael Pasquale), 9)

North American (11th overall) CELT Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon on March 26, 2014, followed by the 3rd international (and 12th overall) CELT Conference in Taipei, Taiwan, May 23-25, 2014 (see <http://www.celtconference.org/>). Other relevant conferences include NACFLA (the North American Christian Foreign Language Association), which meets annually in the U.S. Just as it is important to publish in both Christian and secular journals, it is important to present at both faith-based and secular conferences. Although faith-based proposals can be denied because some reviewers feel religion is an inappropriate topic in education, it is possible for faith-based proposals to be accepted at the larger secular international conventions⁸.

This dual strategy, to work from both the center and the margins, seems to be working. While faith based research and approaches are not fully embraced by all professional colleagues, conferences, and publications, a space is provided when research is framed in ways deemed appropriate by the academy. As stated in the introduction to Wong, Kristjánsson, and Dörnyei (2013),

. . . the unspoken agreement to not allow one's religious faith to "intrude" on one's professional practice is still present within TESOL, as it is in other fields, but research on identity has provided some space to explore how faith and foreign language teaching and learning impact each other in powerful ways. (p. 2)

Finding these areas of entry and working within the rules of academy are key strategies.

Areas Ripe for Research

The following list of research topics⁹, listed below with related scholarship/research, provides areas of interest or need in the exploration of Christian faith (CF) and ELT.

1. The interrelationship of CF and language (Robison, 2011; Snow, 2009)
2. The interrelationship of CF and critical pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2009, 2013)
3. The interrelationship of CF and social justice (Kristjánsson, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2007)
4. The interrelationship of CF and pedagogy (Purgason, 2009; Smith, 2009b; Baurain, 2011)
5. The interrelationship of CF and L2 motivation (Chan, 2013; Ding, 2013)
6. The role of sacred texts in the motivation of L2 learning (Lepp-Kaethler & Dörnyei, 2012)

2012 Hong Kong: 2nd international & 9th CELT Conference (Suresh Canagarajah, Zoltan Dörnyei, & Agnes Lam), and 10) 2013 Dallas, TX: 10th CELT Conference (Mary Wong).

⁸ As an example, from 2002-2010 I had eight faith-based proposals accepted at the international TESOL convention, and six of these were *not* within the Christian forum (CELEF) or Caucus (CETC) sessions that were reserved for papers related to Christianity and ELT. Thus even with the relatively high rejection rate of proposals at TESOL (which has been up to 75%), it is possible for faith-based proposals and even whole panels on faith based issues to be accepted. (I have had several rejections of faith-based proposals, as well, but persistence can pay off.)

⁹ This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather just a starting point.

7. CF and teachers' professional identity (Wong, 2009, 2013; Chan, 2013; Kristjánsson, 2013)
8. CF and teacher beliefs and values (Pasquale, 2013; Hall, 2010; Li, 2012; Varghese & Johnston, 2007)
9. Church-run ESL programs (Han, 2009; Baurain, 2013)
10. Spiritual development and intercultural outcomes (Wu & Wong, 2013; Smith, 2009a)
11. NNEST issues within missions (Wong & Stratton, 2011; Wang-McGrath, 2013)
12. Christian missions and imperialism (Snow, 2013; Johnston & Varghese, 2006; Edge, 2003)
13. Students' spirituality in the classroom (Smith, 2008)
14. Faith-informed ELT materials
15. Faith-informed classroom interactions (Purgason, 2009; Lessard-Clouston, 2013).
16. The impact of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and other religions on language teaching and learning (Wong & Mahboob, forthcoming)
17. Archival research on missionary experiences in teaching as mission (Wong, 2012)
18. The marginalization of non-Christian L2 students on a Christian college campus (Lee, 2012)
19. Survey and evaluation of training for Christian English teaching volunteers
20. Theorizing CF & ELT (Dörnyei, Wong, & Kristjánsson, 2013; Scovel, 2007; Smith, 2013; Wong & Canagarajah, 2009b)

The scholars who wrote response chapters in the Wong, Kristjánsson, and Dörnyei (2013) volume offered suggestions for research on Christian faith and ELT. Kubanyiova (2013) suggested researchers construct rich portraits of Christian teachers and generate thick description of practice. She also suggested that researchers enhance methodological rigor and include examinations of power and bias. Smith (2013) suggested researchers allow the exploration of the relationship of CF and ELT to be more complex and expanded and provide a richer picture of practice. He also suggested the application of coordinated attention to beliefs, practices, institutional dynamics, different contexts, and divergent interpretations. Ushioda (2013) recommended researchers use qualitative and exploratory research approaches, as they have much promise for this type of inquiry but also acknowledge the researchers' voice in the co-constructed context and co-text of the interview data in analysis.

Nurturing Research and Reaping the Harvest

Perhaps most Christian English language teachers may be thinking that this sounds all well and good, but they are just *too busy* to engage in research. Borg (2013a) compiled findings from 1,700 international surveys that he conducted over six years looking at the ways that teachers engage with research. He investigated how teachers view research, to what extent they read it (engaging *with* research), and whether or not they do it (engaging *in* research). Borg explored this area because in spite of the great potential that research has to inform practice, he

suspected that in reality it went underutilized. He wanted to know the nature of teachers' engagement with research and the factors that influence it. Borg found that there was only a moderate level of teachers engaging with research and there were many barriers to overcome. Teachers said that lack of time, limited access, and the lack of skills were barriers that prevented them from engaging more with research. There was also the underlying belief that research did not give teachers practical advice and in some cases teachers were just not interested in research.

Borg (2013b) contends that teachers' engagement with research could be improved if teachers had 1) the technical skills needed to read, interpret, and apply the research; 2) enhanced access to research; 3) the attitudes to see the potential of research to offer possibilities (not solutions), as enabling (not deskilling), and as facilitative (not determinative); 4) training that highlighted the pedagogical relevance of research through a cycle of reading, reflection, applying, reflecting, reading, etc.; and 5) collaborative communities such as reading groups, external partners, and virtual discussions. Perhaps this offers direction in attempting to create and sustain research on Christianity and ELT. A survey of the barriers Christian teachers face as they try to engage with and in research may be a starting point. Are the barriers due to lack of access, training, or skills? Or are the barriers more attitudinal, such as a lack of interest or the belief that engaging with and in research on faith and ELT would not make a difference to their practice? Once barriers are identified, it is easier to overcome them.

What are some other strategies to encourage Christian language teachers to engage with and in research? Some suggestions include encouraging Christian language teachers to: locate and read research on Christian faith and ELT in journals and books; contribute to *CELEA News* on an aspect of faith and teaching; conduct research on a faith-based topic; attend and present at both faith-based and secular conferences; publish findings in both Christian and secular journals; volunteer to chair a CELT conference or work on conference committees; get more training to conduct research if needed; start a teacher research group to read, reflect, and apply research findings; engage in collaborative research; work with others who have the skills, access, or time needed for the project.

Considering and envisioning (Lepp-Kaethler & Dörnyei, 2013; Chan, 2013) the end result may motivate us to engage more fully in this work. The fruits of our labor in creating and sustaining a culture of research on Christianity and ELT could include: a deeper understanding of how faith informs our practice of language teaching and learning which may help us better meet

the needs of our students; a greater awareness of the tensions and complexities of the relationship of faith and ELT which may lead to an increased openness to other people's perspectives; the ability to make pedagogical decisions based on empirical research instead of hunches or assumptions; the opportunity to explore the mysteries of Christ in the exploration of our ability to create, learn, and teach languages; learning from and about other faiths and their impact on teaching and learning; fellowship in joining a community of researchers and educators with a common bond in Christ.

Conclusion

To conclude, publications in the last decade and most notably in the past five years have established a small but growing body of scholarship and research on the interconnections of Christianity and ELT, giving birth to a new area of inquiry waiting to be further explored. This article raised and offered initial responses to several questions about the nature of faith-informed research. It provided an overview of how Christians have been engaging in scholarship within TESOL and suggestions for ways faith-informed research within ELT could be sustained. Multiple actors including English language teachers, graduate students, teacher educators, administrators and program managers all have a role to play in encouraging faith-informed research and scholarship and in answering the question: *To what extent does what I am doing, the way I am doing it, why I'm doing it, and who it benefits align with my understanding of what God has revealed in scripture and creation and what I believe he has called me to do?*

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Nonnative English-speaking Teachers' Self-perceived Language Proficiency Levels, Anxieties, and Learning Strategies

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Abstract

Research suggests that nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) suffer anxiety because of their self-perceived inadequate language ability. This paper reports on an online survey of 63 NNESTs and teacher trainees in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings that investigated the participants' perceived language abilities and their approaches to anxiety and language learning. The results reveal that more than half of the participants were content with their overall language abilities although their levels of contentment varied with distinct skills. The survey results also indicate a complex relationship between NNESTs' perceived language proficiency levels and their anxiety about teaching English. Additionally, the survey also documented the participants' anxiety management methods, language learning strategies, and language learning beliefs. Reflecting on the results, I propose a Christian approach to NNEST issues in terms of self-perception, professional development, and the roles of Christian teacher trainers and colleagues.

Key words: NNESTs, anxiety, ESL/EFL, proficiency, learning strategies

Introduction

This research resulted from my struggle as an NNEST trainee in graduate school in the United States. Prior to my graduate studies, I had worked with American missionaries in Japan to reach out to Japanese non-Christians through an English-teaching ministry. As I taught English there, I began to realize that I needed professional training and applied for an American graduate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Once I started my graduate studies, I suffered a sense of inferiority to my native English-speaking peers. Compared to them, I was far short of fluency and accuracy in using English, and therefore began to doubt whether I was qualified to be an English teacher. For this reason, I conducted the present research to seek a way out of my frustration.

It seems that the sense of inferiority to native speakers in terms of language proficiency is not unusual for NNESTs. For example, Brinton (2004) reports on NNEST trainees' reflective descriptions of their practicum experiences in the U.S. and reveals how the trainees were challenged in class because of their insufficient language knowledge and language skills as

well as how those experiences made them feel inadequate about being English teachers. NNESTs' perceptions about their language proficiency seem to affect not only pre-service but also experienced NNESTs. In the analysis of his survey on Brazilian NNESTs, Rajagopalan (2005) points out that NNESTs' self-perceived language ability, rather than their actual ability to use English, plays a major role in determining their confidence to teach. Medgyes (1999b), an NNEST himself, also asserts that NNESTs incessantly suffer from the "feeling of underachievement" (p. 15) as they compare themselves with native speakers, especially with those who have similar personal and professional backgrounds as theirs.

Regarding the term *native speaker*, researchers have not reached an agreement on the definition (McKay, 2002), and, accordingly, the distinction between native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and NNESTs has been debated among researchers (Kamhi-Stein, 2014). However, *native speaker* is widely used by most people to refer to a model language user for language learners. This popular belief, which is likely to have been instilled in NNESTs, seems to be well captured in the definition of the term by Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 386):

A person who learns a language as a child and continues to use it fluently as a dominant language. Native speakers are said to use a language grammatically, fluently and appropriately, to identify with a community where it is spoken, and to have clear intuitions about what is considered grammatical or ungrammatical in the language.

Researchers have associated NNESTs' negative self-perception as English teachers with their awareness of an insurmountable gap between their knowledge of English and native English speakers'. Rajagopalan (2005), for example, argues that, although there is no such person in the real world who possesses all the characteristics of the ideal native speaker, many nonnative English-teaching professionals seem to fail to realize this and experience a crisis of confidence in teaching. Rajagopalan (2005) also argues that "the very idea that [NNESTs] can never be equal to their [native speaker] colleagues often makes them enter into a spirit of conformity or even defeatism" (p. 293). Likewise, Medgyes (1999b), asserting that "[NNESTs] are less proficient users of English than NESTs" and that for NNESTs "to achieve native-like proficiency is wishful thinking" (p. 31), points out that the sense of inferiority to native speakers discourages NNESTs and puts them under constant stress as they teach English.

As for NNESTs' self-perception of language ability, there have been some research (Reves & Medgyes, 1994) and exhortations for NNESTs to strive for higher language

proficiency levels (Braine, 2010; Llurda, 2005; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Snow, 2007). Also, researchers have proposed language-improvement strategies for NNESTs (Braine, 2010; Nemtchinova, Mahboob, Eslami, & Dogancay-Aktuna, 2010; Snow, 2007). Taking previous research into consideration, the present research was conducted to investigate the reality of NNESTs' self-perceived language proficiency levels, their anxiety management practices, and their strategies for improving their language proficiency levels. The study addressed the following research questions:

- RQ 1. How do NNESTs perceive their language proficiency levels?
- RQ 2. How do they manage anxiety about teaching English?
- RQ 3. What have they done or are they doing to improve their language proficiency levels?

Method

Instrument

The research was conducted using a questionnaire (see the Appendix). The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions on participants' first languages, nationality, gender, age, educational background, and professional experiences/contexts, followed by three questions on self-perception of language proficiency levels, five questions on anxiety about teaching English and coping strategies, and three questions on language-improvement strategies. The questionnaire was created using online survey software provided by SurveyMonkey™.

Data-Collection Procedure

The URL of the questionnaire was distributed via email to six current and former NNEST trainees in the MA TESOL program at a university in the U.S. and to members of the e-list of the NNEST Interest Section in the international Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) association. Additionally, the URL was also distributed by a member of the e-list to an unknown number of her students in the program for teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) at a federal university in Brazil.

Seventy-two teachers and teacher trainees responded to the survey, but the final number of participants to be analyzed was reduced to 63. Of the initial 72 respondents, eight respondents reported that their first or primary language was English. These respondents might be native-like NNESTs who emigrated from non-English-speaking countries in their childhood

(Hansen, 2004), but they were excluded from the data because the reasons for their responses were unknown. Additionally, one person who provided only his or her nationality and first language was not included with the participants.

The responses of the participants were obtained from SurveyMonkey™ in Microsoft Excel® file format for analysis.

Participants

The 63 participants varied in terms of their first languages, nationalities, and ages. Portuguese-speaking Brazilians formed the largest group ($n=33$), followed by Spanish speakers from Latin American countries ($n=10$), Korean speakers from South Korea ($n=7$), Mandarin Chinese speakers from mainland China and Taiwan ($n=4$), Japanese speakers from Japan ($n=2$), Russian speakers from Russia ($n=2$), speakers of other Asian languages from Southeast Asia and Western Asia ($n=3$), and speakers of other European languages from Africa and Central America ($n=2$). Fifty-eight participants (92.1%) were in their 20s to 40s, and the clear majority were female ($n=56$).

Forty-seven participants (74.6%) were educated at English-medium institutions at various levels between kindergarten and graduate school, for an average period of 4.0 years. Twenty-four participants (38.1%) had English-medium education only at the post-secondary level, and 13 participants (20.6%) had both secondary and post-secondary education in English. Ten participants (15.9%) had English-medium education only at the secondary level. Since the survey did not ask the participants where their schools were located, it was unclear whether the participants received English-medium education in their own countries or English-speaking countries.

As for the length of the participants' English learning as a second/foreign language, no reliable data were obtained because some participants seemed to interpret "English as a subject" in Question 5 as English as a mainstream school subject while others interpreted it as English as a second/foreign language.

The participants' teaching experiences and contexts varied. The largest group was of those who had taught for more than 10 years ($n=16$), followed by those with 3-5 years of experience ($n=13$), those with 1-2 years of experience ($n=12$), and those still in training ($n=10$). The participants' target teaching levels ranged from beginning to advanced, but the levels and

types of their schools (e.g., primary, secondary, tertiary, private, public) were unknown. As for their teaching environments, 45 participants (71.4 %) were in EFL contexts.

Results

Participants' Self-Perceived Language Proficiency Levels

Questions 11 through 13 of the questionnaire probed the participants' views of their overall and specific language abilities and their awareness of differences between themselves and native English speakers. The data revealed that 42 participants (66.6%) were content with their overall language proficiency levels (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Participant Contentment with Their Overall Language Proficiency*

Contentment	<i>n</i>	Percentage (<i>n</i> =63)
Absolutely yes	14	22.2
Yes	28	44.4
No	18	28.6
Absolutely not	3	4.8

While the majority of the participants perceived their overall proficiency levels positively, their contentment with various skills differed (see Table 2). According to the responses to Question 12, most participants were positive about their ability in reading (90.5%) and listening (81.0%). As for grammar, pronunciation, and writing, more than 70% of the participants had positive self-perception. The skill that the participants were least positive about was vocabulary (57.1%), followed by pragmatics (69.8%) and speaking (69.8%).

Table 2. *Participant Positive Self-Perception of Each Skill*

Skills	Positive responses (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (<i>n</i> =63)
Reading	57	90.5
Listening	51	81.0
Grammar	50	79.4
Pronunciation	48	76.2
Writing	47	74.6
Pragmatics	44	69.8
Speaking	44	69.8
Vocabulary	36	57.1

Question 13 asked the participants about the frequency of their comparison between themselves and native speakers in terms of language proficiency. In the question, I used the term *native speakers* with the definition cited above by Richards and Schmidt (2010) in mind, but I did not present the definition in the questionnaire. Forty participants (63.5%) answered that they always or usually compared their proficiency levels with native speakers', while only two participants (3.2%) answered they never compared themselves with native speakers (see Table 3). Interestingly, of the 40 participants who frequently compared themselves with native speakers, 25 participants were content with their overall proficiency.

Table 3. *Participants' Comparison Between Themselves and Native Speakers*

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage (n=63)</u>
Always	16	25.4
Usually	24	38.1
Sometimes	14	22.2
Occasionally	7	11.1
Never	2	3.2

Participants' Anxiety About Teaching English

Questions 14 and 15 examined the participants' anxiety about teaching English because of their language proficiency levels and the causes to which they ascribed their anxiety. According to the findings of Question 14, 31 participants (49.2%) acknowledged that they were anxious about teaching English because of their self-perceived language proficiency levels (see Table 4.1). In Question 15, the respondents to Question 14 were asked about the potential causes of their anxiety, and they pointed to *correcting student errors*, *handling student questions*, and *answering culture-related questions* as the major causes (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.1 *Participants' Anxiety in Relation to Self-Perceived Language Proficiency Levels*

<u>Responses</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage (n=63)</u>
Absolutely yes	8	12.7
Yes	23	36.5
No	20	31.7
Absolutely not	12	19.1

Table 4.2 *Anxiety-Inducing Activities*

Activities	<i>n</i> *	Percentage (<i>n</i> =31)
Correcting student errors	17	54.8
Answering student questions	15	48.4
Answering culture-related questions	13	41.9
Giving feedback on pronunciation	10	32.3
Teaching communicative activities	9	29.0
Giving instructions to students	8	25.8

* Multiple answers were allowed.

Question 15 also provided the respondents with an open-ended option to allow them to add and address other causes of anxiety. The respondents' answers indicated that, in addition to the activities given in the multiple-choice question, the following factors were perceived to cause them anxiety:

- Lack of fluency in speaking (*n*=2)
- Insufficient lexical knowledge (*n*=2)
- Insufficient grammar knowledge or grammar instruction skills (*n*=2)
- Lack of accuracy in speaking (*n*=1)
- Lack of language instinct (*n*=1)

Question 16 asked the relevant participants (who answered "yes" to Question 14) about their strategies for coping with anxiety. Twenty-six of the 31 respondents described how they managed anxiety, and their strategies were classified into six categories (see Table 5). Some respondents used more than one anxiety management strategy. The most popular strategy among the respondents was thorough preparation for classes.

Table 5. *Coping Strategies*

Strategies	<i>n</i> *	Percentage (<i>n</i> =31)
Preparing well before class	12	38.7
Improving language ability	5	16.1
Acknowledging limitations/strengths	5	16.1
Learning from native/proficient speakers	3	9.7
Making a mental effort to stay calm	3	9.7
Avoiding particular activities	2	6.5

* Multiple answers were allowed.

Questions 17 and 18 asked the relevant respondents whether they had discussed their anxieties with someone and, if they had, whom they consulted. The results showed that 27 respondents had talked to other people about their teaching anxiety, particularly colleagues or teacher trainers rather than their families or employers (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Choices of Consultants*

Consultants	<i>n</i> *
Nonnative English-speaking peers/colleagues	16
Native English-speaking peers/colleagues	15
Professors	14
Family	10
Employers	2

* Multiple answers were allowed.

Participants' Language Learning Strategies

According to the results of Questions 19 and 20, 55 participants (87.3%) had done or were doing something to improve their language skills, and 31 of these 55 participants used more than one strategy. The strategies were categorized according to their target skills, and the number of participants who had used or were using each strategy is provided in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

Table 7.1 *Language Learning Strategies: The Four Language Skills*

Target skills and strategies	Users (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (<i>n</i> =55)
Speaking	21	38.2
Speaking to English speakers (native/nonnative)	16	29.1
Reading out loud/speaking to oneself	3	5.5
Giving presentations	2	3.6
<u>Reading novels, newspapers, etc.</u>	20	36.4
Listening	19	34.5
Watching videos, TV programs, etc.	14	25.4
Listening to the radio, music, etc.	5	9.1
<u>Writing blogs, articles, etc.</u>	5	9.1

As the data above show, the participants had used or were using a wide variety of strategies for developing the four language skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, and writing), subskills (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation), and integrated skills. No strategy for improving

Table 7.2 *Language Learning Strategies: Subskills, Integrated Skills, and Others*

Target skills and strategies	Users (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (<i>n</i> =55)
Pronunciation	3	5.5
Grammar/vocabulary		
Studying grammar	5	9.1
Studying vocabulary	3	5.5
Doing exercises using textbooks/ websites	1	1.8
Asking native speakers for error correction	1	1.8
Integrated skills		
Preparing for/taking proficiency tests	10	18.2
Studying in school (e.g., graduate school)	8	14.5
Studying/living overseas	3	5.5
Attending conferences	2	3.6
Getting involved in a professional organization	1	1.8
Other		
Studying translation	1	1.8

pragmatic skills was included in the responses. Among all the participants' strategies, activities for enhancing speaking, reading, and listening skills were more popular than the other activities (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Regarding the integrated skills, studying for proficiency tests was the most popular activity, followed by studying English in educational institutions, such as graduate schools (see Table 7.2).

It is noteworthy that some of the participants' responses showed their dependence on native speakers as language-improving resources: as conversation partners (*n*=7); as model writers (*n*=2); as a pronunciation coach (*n*=1); as a writing coach (*n*=1); and as an advisor on the English language in general (*n*=1).

Question 21 asked the participants what kind of language learning strategy they found most effective for improving their language proficiency levels, and 58 participants (92.1%) provided responses to this question (see Tables 8.1 and 8.2). Contrary to the results of Question 20, reading, writing, and studying for proficiency tests were not highly regarded as influential factors for the participants' language improvement. On the other hand, more participants found speaking and listening activities to be helpful in improving their proficiency in English. As for integrated skills, immersion in English-speaking environments at home, at work, and in school (e.g., graduate school) was regarded as the most influential language-improvement factor by the participants. In addition to the strategies and activities directly related to language skills improvement, some participants mentioned their engagement in their profession (i.e., teaching

English) and attitudes toward language learning (e.g., motivation, persistence) as contributing factors to their English language improvement.

Table 8.1 *Most Influential Factors in Participants' Language Ability Improvement: The Four Language Skills*

Target skills and influential factors	Responses (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (<i>n</i> =58)
Speaking	19	32.7
Speaking to English speakers (native/nonnative)	17	29.3
Taking conversation classes/lessons	2	3.4
Reading novels, newspapers, etc.	8	13.8
Listening	18	30.9
Watching videos, TV programs, etc.	14	24.1
Listening to English speakers (native/nonnative)	2	3.4
Listening to the radio, music, etc.	2	3.4
Writing constantly	1	1.7

Table 8.2 *Most Influential Factors in Participants' Language Ability Improvement: Subskills, Integrated Skills, and Other*

Target skills and influential factors	Responses (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (<i>n</i> =58)
Pronunciation		
Practicing pronunciation	1	1.7
Watching TV shows/sitcoms	1	1.7
Grammar/vocabulary		
Watching TV shows/sitcoms	3	5.2
Studying vocabulary	1	1.7
Applying grammar knowledge to daily communication	1	1.7
Integrated skills		
Being immersed in English-speaking environments	9	15.5
Studying in school (e.g., graduate school)	4	6.9
Preparing for/taking proficiency tests	1	1.7
Doing daily activities in English	1	1.7
Participating in projects, conferences, etc.	1	1.7
Other		
Motivation/persistence	8	13.8
Teaching English	7	12.1
Using the Internet	3	5.2
Discussing linguistic issues with peers	2	3.4
Working on weaknesses	1	1.7
Singing songs	1	1.7
Thinking in English	1	1.7
Self-studying	1	1.7

Discussion

RQ 1. How do NNESTs perceive their language proficiency levels?

This survey revealed that, although their self-perceived proficiency levels varied among different skills, the majority of the participants were content with their ability to use English. Although it is difficult to pinpoint all the contributing factors, the participants' experiences in English-medium education and their cultural backgrounds may be among those contributing to their positive self-perceptions. For example, of eight participants who had English-medium education only at the undergraduate/graduate levels, five participants (62.5%) responded that they were not content with their overall language proficiency levels. On the other hand, all the seven respondents who had English-medium education at both the secondary and tertiary levels were positive about their overall language abilities. As for the possible influence of cultural differences on the participants' self-perception, a comparison between the Brazilian respondents and the Korean and Chinese respondents showed an interesting contrast. While 23 of 33 Brazilians (69.7%) were positive about their overall language ability, only four of 10 Koreans and Chinese (40.0%) had positive views of their language proficiency levels. In her research on cultural differences and learner anxiety, Lim (2009) has revealed that Koreans and Chinese are more likely to suffer anxiety in learning English because of various factors including the fear of failure leading to losing face, and the respondents with Korean and Chinese backgrounds in the present research seem to indicate this tendency, although the number of the participants was small. Further research is needed to examine the correlations among various factors, including those mentioned above, to determine what contributes to NNESTs' positive self-perceived language proficiency levels.

As for separate language skills, the survey revealed that a majority of the participants were highly content with their reading/listening skills. One contributing factor to this result may be the availability of materials and opportunities for improving these skills. Unlike speaking, which usually calls for an interlocutor, reading and listening can be done individually, regardless of time or location. Furthermore, technology, such as the Internet, has made authentic listening/reading materials more readily available than previously. In fact, some of the participants in the present research commented on the Internet as the most effective tool for language improvement.

Unlike their reading/listening skills, the participants were least content with their vocabulary, which is understandable, considering the vastness of the English lexicon and the multi-faceted nature of vocabulary. Crystal (2003) compares two major English dictionaries and estimates that “their combined lexicon would exceed three-quarters of a million” words (p. 119). Crystal (2003) also points out lexical items which are not always included in dictionaries, such as expressions in local dialects, slang words, abbreviations, and scientific terms, and argues that “it is difficult to see how even a conservative estimate of English vocabulary could go much below a million lexemes” (p. 119). In addition to the enormity of English vocabulary, the multiple elements of each lexical item lay a burden on learners, including NNESTs. Zimmerman (2009) explains that the knowledge of a word consists of many “layers” (p. 5), such as meaning, grammatical forms, and appropriateness, and that learning them is a gradual, long-term process. Thus, the mastery of the English vocabulary poses a challenge to all learners of English, regardless of their native-speaker/nonnative-speaker status. However, the endeavor is even more challenging to nonnative English speakers, especially NNESTs. NNESTs’ insufficient lexical knowledge is often challenged by students and is thus detrimental to their credibility and self-confidence as teachers (Medgyes, 1999a). In fact, that is what I have experienced as an EFL teacher in Japan, where students often expect teachers to know everything about the English language. Therefore, teacher training focused on vocabulary improvement, such as an intensive vocabulary instruction course for teacher trainees (Medgyes, 1999a) and a daily-life vocabulary course utilizing children’s stories (Dabars & Kagan, 2002), might help NNESTs enhance their self-perception of language abilities.

Following vocabulary, speaking and pragmatics were the skills the participants were least content with. While one third of the participants ($n=21$) answered that they had done or were doing activities for improving their speaking skills, no one mentioned any learning strategies for learning pragmatics. It is pointed out that, with poor pragmatic knowledge, language learners are prone to “the devastating effect of [their] grammatically correct, yet situationally inappropriate spoken or written communication” (Tatsuki & Houck, 2010, p. 1). NNESTs are no exception. In order for them to enhance their self-perceived language abilities, therefore, it is necessary for NNESTs to increase not only grammatical/lexical knowledge but also pragmatic knowledge. Additionally, the discrepancy between the participants’ awareness of their insufficient pragmatic knowledge and their apparent lack of strategies for dealing with

the problem seems to indicate that training in pragmatics and learning strategies could help NNESTs greatly.

In the questionnaire, I asked NNESTs how often they compared their proficiency levels with native speakers', assuming that, based on the literature review above (Medgyes, 1999b; Rajagopalan, 2005), NNESTs who frequently compared themselves with native speakers would not be content with their language ability. However, the research revealed that 62.5% of the 40 participants who frequently made comparisons between themselves and native speakers were positive about their overall language proficiency levels. This unexpected result could be due to my failure to present the definition of the term *native speakers* for the present research. As I mentioned earlier, I used the term for model speakers of English, as is often the case in popular conversation. However, in reality, there are differences among so-called native speakers regarding language proficiency levels, and it could be that some participants with high proficiency levels compared themselves with native speakers with lower proficiency levels and gained confidence in their language ability. Thus, my initial assumption about NNESTs' frequent comparison with native speakers and their discontentment with their language proficiency levels was not confirmed.

RQ 2. How do NNESTs manage anxiety about teaching English?

The literature review above (Medgyes, 1999b; Rajagopalan, 2005) suggests that NNESTs who are not content with their language ability are perhaps more prone to anxiety about teaching English than those who are content. However, the survey has indicated that this argument may not always apply to all NNESTs. For example, five of the 21 respondents who were discontent with their language abilities answered that they were not anxious about teaching English. On the other hand, 15 respondents who were content with their proficiency levels still expressed anxiety because of their language abilities. These apparently contradictory results suggest a complex relationship between NNESTs' self-perceived language proficiency levels and their potential anxiety about teaching English. To elucidate the relationship, further research is needed.

Many of the participants who were anxious about teaching English chose correcting student errors and answering student questions as the activities they were anxious about, which can be accounted for by their sense of insecurity or the unpredictability of questions. Correcting

errors puts teachers' language ability to the test, thus causing the teachers to feel insecure; answering questions may cause anxiety because it is impossible to perfectly predict what questions will be asked and to be prepared for them. Those two factors may affect all teachers no matter how proficient they may be in English, regardless of their native/nonnative status.

As for anxiety management strategies, more respondents ($n=12$) mentioned well-preparedness for classes as their coping strategy than those who referred to improving their language proficiency levels ($n=5$) (see Table 5). This result does not necessarily indicate the respondents' lack of concern about improving their language ability, but it seems that the respondents may be more focused on managing anxiety about teaching particular groups of students on a daily basis than on improving their language proficiency levels in general.

Several respondents with teaching anxiety adopted what could be called "strategies of acknowledgement." They acknowledged both their limitations and strengths as nonnative speakers and attempted to capitalize on seeing themselves as whole persons. Considering the impossibility of predicting all the questions from students and preparing for everything, a strategy like this may also play a key role for NNESTs to manage teaching anxiety.

The survey also revealed that the respondents consulted other people about their anxieties, especially those who were engaged in the same profession. Considering this result, further research on the effect of peer/mentor consultation and its methodologies would be beneficial not only to NNESTs who seek encouragement and advice but also to those who are willing to help NNESTs with anxiety.

RQ 3. What have NNESTs done or are they doing to improve their language proficiency levels?

This survey revealed the participants' adoption of a wide range of language learning strategies and their earnest efforts to improve their language skills. Of all their responses, strategies for speaking/listening skills were prominent as popular and effective strategies for language ability development. That seems to be reasonable, considering the fact that speaking, or oral communication, was one of the skills the participants were not very content with.

One point to note is the native speaker's role as a language resource and language partner for NNESTs. Some participants acknowledged the positive effect of interacting with native English-speaking friends and colleagues on improving their language ability. Researchers have also acknowledged the benefits of interactions between NESTs and NNESTs

as effective strategies for enhancing NNESTs' language proficiency levels and intercultural knowledge (Dormer, 2010; Wu, Liang, & Csepelyi, 2010). Therefore, NNESTs should be aware of the benefits of cooperation with NESTs and seek opportunities to interact.

Reflecting on the Present Research as a Christian NNEST

This survey seems to indicate that many NNESTs believe in earnest self-effort as the key to success in achieving higher language proficiency levels and managing teaching anxiety. However, this approach may not always be effective in eliminating NNESTs' anxiety about teaching English. Pursuing and depending on success for a feeling of self-worth as teachers could entangle NNESTs in persistent fear of failure and rejection (Liang, 2009).

It may be true that the root cause of NNESTs' anxiety, related to their self-perceived language disability, is not necessarily their language ability per se but their negative self-perception itself (Kamhi-Stein, 2014). Some people might say that anxiety about teaching English can even be found among NESTs. However, I suspect that an inferiority complex about language proficiency levels is unique to NNESTs and that it is hard for those who suffer from the complex to break the bondage to it.

Facing these dilemmas, NNESTs whose self-perceived language ability falls short of that of native English-speaking colleagues may wonder whether they will ever be set free from this indelible sense of inadequacy. In fact, since I started to pursue a career in teaching English, I have been tormented by this sense of hopelessness. However, there is hope for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. He has made us righteous and perfect in God's sight because of His death on the cross for our sins and His resurrection from the dead. He has also made us worthy because *He* is worthy. As the Apostle Paul states, "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39, NIV), and we can add to that list our self-perceived language proficiency levels and our sense of inadequacy. Therefore, before devoting our time to professional development, including language skills improvement and anxiety management, we Christian NNESTs should dig deeper than the surface level of self-effort and lay the foundation of our confidence on Christ Jesus the Rock. On this Rock alone can we firmly stand when our language ability is challenged.

Some participants with teaching anxiety due to their language proficiency levels responded that acknowledging their limitations helped them deal with anxiety. This power of acknowledging weaknesses is also found in the Bible. The Lord Himself says that “[His] power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). Therefore, we Christian NNESTs can rejoice even if we regarded ourselves, or were regarded by others, as weaker in our language ability than native English speakers. We can joyfully and confidently say, “Lord, we have been purchased with Your blood, and we are Yours. For Your glory, use all that we are and all that we have, even our weaknesses.” This total, faithful surrender to Christ will set us free from the bondage of a sense of inadequacy. Therefore, let us rejoice and praise the Lord for our weaknesses.

In the survey, the participants with anxiety about teaching English also reported that acknowledging their unique strengths as nonnative English speakers helped them cope with anxiety. This strategy is similar to the biblical principle of diversity in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul says that “those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Cor. 12:22). He also states that God has brought all the different parts of the body with different strengths and weaknesses together as one body (1 Cor. 12:24-25). Compared to NESTs, NNESTs may be weaker when it comes to language skills, but they may be stronger in other teaching skills, such as understanding students’ needs and explaining the structures of the English language, because of their own experiences as English learners (Medgyes, 2001). As indispensable parts of the body of Christian English teachers, NNESTs should be aware of their unique strengths and capitalize on them.

That being said, I would like to encourage my fellow Christian NNESTs and myself to do our best in our professional development, including language skills improvement, for we are serving Christ Jesus our Lord (Col. 3:23-24). As for NNESTs’ devotion to language ability development, researchers emphasize it as language-teaching professionals’ responsibility (Braine, 2010; Medgyes, 1999a). As servants of God, I would suggest we take this responsibility even more seriously than others in the field of English language teaching, being obedient and faithful to His calling and the gifts He has entrusted to us for teaching English.

Suggestions for Christian Teacher Trainers and Christian Colleagues of NNESTs

This survey indicates that NNESTs and NNEST trainees with anxiety are likely to ask their trainers and colleagues for advice and encouragement. Therefore, it is necessary for

Christian teacher trainers and Christian colleagues to be aware of the issues that their nonnative English-speaking teacher trainees and colleagues deal with, to pray for them, to be ready to provide them with practical advice and help, and to work side by side with them. In my case, for example, my professors in graduate school helped me when I lost confidence in teaching English because of my insufficient language ability compared to my proficient English-speaking classmates. One of the professors helped me become aware of the strengths I had and demonstrated how they could be used to help ESL students learn English. Another professor helped me find a tutor so that I would be able to practice speaking English. The other professor, who was an NNEST himself, introduced me to literature on various NNEST issues to encourage me. Best of all, they all prayed for me every time I visited their offices. Without their faithful and prayerful support, I could not have completed my graduate studies to be an effective English teacher.

Interaction and collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs in and outside the classroom complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, and various collaborative activities (e.g., language exchange programs and material design) enhance not only NNESTs' language skills but also their awareness of the unique strengths they have, which benefit NESTs in their workplaces (Dormer, 2010). In my present workplace in Japan, for example, NESTs on the staff ask me for effective methods for explaining grammar to Japanese students and refer their students with grammatical questions to me, while I ask the NESTs lexical and pragmatic questions raised by my students. In the process, I have become more aware of my strengths and more appreciative of being an NNEST.

Thus, I would like to suggest that Christian teacher trainers and Christian NESTs prayerfully encourage and support NNESTs who suffer from teaching anxiety caused by their negative self-perceived language proficiency levels so that they would be able to achieve their full potential as English language teachers.

Conclusion

This survey was conducted to describe NNESTs' self-perceived language proficiency levels, anxiety management, and language improvement strategies. The results revealed that more than half of the participants were content with their overall language abilities although their levels of contentment varied with different skills. As for the participants' teaching anxiety,

this survey has suggested that NNESTs' self-perceived language proficiency levels may not necessarily be related to their anxiety about teaching English, which calls for further research on the causes of NNESTs' teaching anxiety. The survey has also shown that NNESTs with anxiety due to their insufficient language abilities adopt various strategies to cope with anxiety. As for language-improvement strategies, this survey described the participants' adoption of a wide variety of methods.

In light of the results of this present research, I have discussed a Christian approach to NNEST issues in terms of self-perception, professional development, and cooperation with NESTs. For us Christian NNESTs, Christ Jesus is the foundation of our self-worth, and He is strong in our weaknesses. We are also given unique strengths, which benefit English language teaching as a whole. Acknowledging those points, we can devote ourselves to language ability development as a part of our service to Christ Jesus. Additionally, I have suggested Christian teacher trainers' prayerful and practical support of NNEST trainees and Christian NESTs' collaboration with NNESTs.

Since this research was focused on describing the participants' self-perception of language proficiency levels, anxiety, and language skills development, no in-depth analysis was conducted of correlations among variables that may have influenced the participants' responses. Furthermore, one particular participant group with the same linguistic and cultural background was far larger than the other groups, and that has affected the survey results. These limitations merely highlight the need for further research, however. To investigate NNESTs' self-perceived realities regarding their language abilities and the issues of anxiety that arise from their self-perceptions of language proficiency levels, further research on NNESTs across a wider range of sociocultural and professional backgrounds is needed.

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Appendix: The Survey Questionnaire

1. Nationality:
2. First or dominant language:
3. Gender Male Female
4. Age 20s 30s 40s 50s 60 and older
5. How many years have you studied English as a subject? years
6. Have you studied at an English-medium educational institution? Yes No
7. If yes, for how long and at what levels? years
 kindergarten elementary junior high high school undergraduate grad school
8. How many years have you been teaching?
a. Still in training b. 1-2 years c. 3-5 years d. 6-10 years e. More than 10 years
f. None of the above (please explain _____)
9. What is your teaching level?
 beginners intermediate advanced other (_____)
10. What is your teaching environment? ESL EFL
11. Are you content with your overall proficiency in English?
 Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
12. Are you content with your proficiency in the following skills?
 - 1) Grammar Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 2) Vocabulary Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 3) Reading Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 4) Listening Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 5) Speaking Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 6) Writing Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 7) Pronunciation Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 8) Pragmatics Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
 - 9) Other skills (Please explain _____)
13. Do you compare your proficiency with native speakers'??
 Always (100%) Usually (80%) Sometimes (50%) Occasionally (20%) Never (0%)
14. Do you have anxiety about teaching English because of your language proficiency?
 Absolutely yes Yes No Absolutely not
15. If your answer (to Question #14) is yes, what are you anxious about? Please choose as many as applicable to you.
 - 1) Students asking questions
 - 2) Teaching communicative activities
 - 3) Correcting students' errors
 - 4) Giving feedback on students' pronunciation
 - 5) Giving instructions to students
 - 6) Answering questions about the target culture

- 7) Others (please explain _____)
16. If you answered “absolutely yes” or “yes” to Question #14, please describe how you manage your anxiety: _____
17. Have you talked to anyone about your anxiety? ___ Yes ___ No
18. If yes, with whom? Choose as many choices as applicable to you.
- a. A native English-speaking classmate/colleague
 - b. A nonnative English-speaking classmate/colleague
 - c. Your family
 - d. Your professor(s)
 - e. Your employer
 - f. Your mentor (please explain _____)
 - g. Others (please explain _____)
19. Have you done or are you doing anything to improve your language proficiency?
___ Yes ___ No
20. If yes (for Question #19), please describe what you have done or are doing right now:

21. What has helped you most to improve your proficiency in English?

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Faith and Pedagogy: Five Voices from Japan

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Abstract

Despite a recent increase in research into the relationship between faith and practice in ELT, the ways in which actual Christian teachers make meaning of their faith through pedagogy remains largely unexplored. There is little empirical data about the ways in which witnessing and evangelism are (or are not) conducted through English classes. The present study is an analysis of interview data collected from five evangelical Christian teachers living and working in Japan. The participants vary considerably in age and teaching context, yet all share a strong religious faith and a desire to express it through their profession. Each participant was interviewed twice, for approximately one hour each time. The interviews were then fully transcribed and analyzed. The study found that these teachers did not make meaning of their faith and pedagogy in a way that necessitates overt evangelism in the classroom. Rather, they prefer to express their beliefs through personal virtues of love and respect, holding to a high standard of professionalism, and encouraging exploration of deeper life issues in class.

Key words: Christianity and ELT, EFL, faith, interview research, pedagogy

Introduction

The evangelical Christian English language teacher is often caught in the midst of a complex dilemma concerning how (or whether) their faith is expressed in the classroom. On the one hand, there is much encouragement from scripture to evangelize those who do not yet know God by proclaiming the gospel message. Yet, on the other hand, it is often seen 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. Although this dilemma affects great numbers of Christian teachers worldwide, there has been little empirical research concerning the way in which this dilemma is worked out in the minds of these teachers. This study aims to investigate, firstly, how some Christian teachers negotiate the tension between a desire to evangelize and a desire to follow cultural and industry guidelines that often proscribe evangelism. Secondly, the study aims to gather some insight into the practical ways in which Christian faith can inform daily pedagogical decisions.

Background and Theoretical Framework

There has been no shortage of controversy surrounding the issue of religious belief in the classroom. Those who are alarmed by the association of English language teaching (ELT) with missionary endeavor raise concerns about colonialism and imperialism, as well as charges of duplicity aimed at teachers who try to convert their students (e.g., Edge, 1996, 2003, 2004; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). Others, however, applaud the positive contribution that an evangelical faith brings to the language classroom, and argue that this faith is the bedrock of excellence and professionalism for Christian language teachers (see, e.g., Byler, 2009; Griffith, 2004; Purgason, 2004; Smith & Carvill, 2000; Snow, 2001; Tennant, 2002; Wong, 2009).

At the heart of the problem is the recognition that teaching is itself a moral activity. Many scholars have argued that the teacher is a moral agent, whose decisions and actions in the classroom are unavoidably value-laden (Dewey, 1909; Johnston, 2003; Noddings, 1992; Tom, 1984). The aim of all teaching is to change students for the better, but notions of “better” and “worse”, “right” and “wrong” are essentially moral in nature.

The moral dilemma of evangelical Christianity in ELT has been explored by Varghese and Johnston (2007) in their study of teachers-in-training at two Christian colleges in the U.S. All ten participants held an essential belief that, as teachers, it was right to influence their students towards being converted. Varghese and Johnston (2007) write, “[W]e respected the strength of evangelical teachers’ religious beliefs, but at the same time, we felt that these beliefs pose a challenge to the prevailing values of the profession” (p. 13). The participants were all undergraduates and had not yet entered full-time ELT or missionary work. The present study hopes to build upon that research, in order to look at evangelical Christians who have left university and have been working as English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers for some time. Specifically, this study aims to gain an insight into two areas: (a) the lived experience of five evangelical EFL teachers in Japan; and (b) the ways in which these teachers subjectively interpret the relationship between their faith and their teaching.

The theoretical framework adopted for this study follows what Seidman (2006) terms in-depth, phenomenologically based interviewing. Seidman (2006) sees interviewing not as a means to test hypotheses or evaluate ideas, but rather at the root of in-depth interviewing is “an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of

that experience” (p. 9). What I am primarily interested in is understanding how Christian EFL teachers experience, and make meaning of, the complex interactions between their faith and their pedagogical practice.

The view taken in this study is that the research interview is *social practice*, as against the idea of the interview as research instrument (Talmy, 2011). Treating the interview as social practice leads to “problematizing the assumptions that constitute it, treating interviews not as sites for the excavation of information held by respondents, but as participation in social practices” (Talmy, 2011, p. 28). As Mann (2011) argued in his review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics, there is a need for greater recognition of the co-constructed nature of interviews, including the interactional context and the role of the interviewer. Accordingly, the interview data were analyzed not only in terms of the product of the interview, but attention was also paid to the process involved in the co-construction of meaning.

Study Context and Participants

Participants in the study, all volunteers, were five full-time professional English teachers living and working in Japan. As an active approach to interviewing was taken, participants were deliberately selected who could give personal voice to experience, and who possessed horizons of meaning that were representative of the subject being studied (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). These were all evangelical Christians, with ‘evangelicalism’ being defined as “The movement in modern Christianity, transcending denominational and confessional boundaries, that emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of the faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency” (Pierard, 1984, p. 379). An evangelical Christian is someone who identifies with this movement. As such, the participants all believed that (1) there is only one God, the maker of heaven and earth; (2) this God has revealed himself through his son Jesus Christ; (3) salvation and eternal life are found in Christ alone; and therefore, (4) all Christians have a divine obligation to proclaim this truth to unbelievers.

In addition to their religious beliefs, the participants all saw themselves as career English teaching professionals. Their main source of income came from English teaching, and they located themselves within the much broader industry of ELT in Japan. The participants were selected through snowball sampling – networking through existing friendship groups and

acquaintances. They were informed of the focus of the study and were free to drop out at any time. All names used here are pseudonyms, and care has been taken to ensure anonymity.

In recognition of the co-constructed nature of interviews, it is essential to reveal my own personal background, values and beliefs. I am a professional English teacher and researcher, and also an evangelical Christian. As myself and the interviewees belong to the same group, this is a situation that has been termed cocategorical incumbency (Roulston, Baker, & Liljestrom, 2001). We have a shared interest in, and knowledge of, the topic of inquiry. We also have a shared language and vocabulary related to Christianity and ELT, which allowed the interviewees to speak freely and openly about their experiences, without feeling the need to translate their own utterances.

Data Collection

Each participant was interviewed twice, with a gap of one week between the first and second interview, in order to allow for deeper processing over time. (The only exception was Jim, who, due to scheduling constraints, was interviewed twice in the one day.) Although Seidman (2006) argues for a series of three interviews, it was felt that two would be sufficient to allow participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives. Each interview lasted around 60 minutes, and was recorded and transcribed in full. An early draft of this manuscript was also sent to each participant, in order to get corrections and clarifications of the interpretation of the data. The first interview focused on putting the participant's experience in context, as well as getting the concrete details of their lives as Christians and as EFL teachers. The second interview reviewed what was said in the previous interview, and used that as a basis for the participants to make meaning of and reflect upon that experience. An interview guide was used, but this functioned more as a conversational agenda rather than a procedural directive.

Data Analysis

I interviewed the participants and transcribed the data myself, which fostered an intimacy with the narratives before analysis began. I then read and re-read the texts through a process of hermeneutic phenomenological reflection (Van Manen, 1990). Firstly, a selective reading approach was used to isolate passages that seemed to be thematic of the experience of being a Christian EFL teacher. Next, a distinction between incidental and essential themes was made

through the method of free imaginative variation (Van Manen, 1990, p. 107). A number of essential themes emerged, which are presented below.

Results

The five participants were each situated in a unique teaching context in Japan. For analytical purposes, they have been split into two groups: (1) school owners and (2) teaching staff. Dividing the responses in this way consciously acknowledges the fact that school owners have a lot more freedom in deciding what happens in their classrooms. The owners are three men who established and now teach in their own privately run English schools. The teaching staff are two women who are employees at mainstream educational institutions. The fact that the school owners were all men and the staff were both women was coincidental.

The School Owners

Sketch of participants. Walter is in his late 50s, with many years experience in ELT. In addition to running a private English school, he also develops and sells original English teaching products, and is often invited to speak at teaching seminars. Henry is in his mid-40s. He has a Master of Divinity degree and also a Master's in TESOL, and worked as a pastor of a Japanese American church in the U.S. for 15 years. Jim is in his 30s. He hasn't had any formal English teacher training, but he has a degree in International Business. His school has been operating for about 6 years.

Outline of teaching context. All three men own and run their own school, which means they have ultimate decision-making power over curriculum, student discipline, and everything that pertains to the EFL classroom. During the interview with Jim, he often repeated, "It's my school," carrying the implicit meaning: I can largely do what I want.

Personal narratives of faith and pedagogy. A common trait amongst all three school owners is that during regular class time they say they don't evangelize, they don't pray, and they don't use bibles. However, they all place strong emphasis on virtue and character.

Within Walter's classroom, one of the primary ways he expresses his faith is through discipline. He witnesses to "the truth of the order of God's creation" by imposing order in his lessons: in terms of structured lesson plans, and a definite hierarchy of teacher above the student, rather than vice-versa. He says:

There's order in the universe, there should be order in your life and in your words, in your lessons. Virtue is a beautiful thing. Education without virtue is destructive. Education without character is destructive. Not just worthless, destructive. And some will insist that I should not impose my values on my lessons. That is garbage. ...God has clear structure and order and he, if you understand that, he wants you as the teacher to convey structure and order. Therefore teach – I teach virtue, character, with humor and love and respect. ...We are each given human dignity, from God. Therefore, [that student is] precious, respect him, and he should respect you. And you should respect each other. So I don't tolerate misbehaviour. (Walter)

Walter makes a number of shifts in his narrative position in the above passage, first speaking of fundamental truths that can be universally declared, then speaking as a teacher trainer imparting advice to younger teachers, and then speaking as a teacher himself to an imagined student in his class. Walter bases his pedagogical method on absolute biblical truths as he understands them. However, Walter says these biblical truths are not promulgated in his classroom. As part of respecting students, Walter says he always gives his utmost effort in class. He mentioned that he usually finishes overtime. He goes at least 10 minutes, sometimes more, over the finishing time, as his students “need” it. Sixty minutes is not enough. He'll cut into his dinner time to give a full lesson. Also, he won't force students to listen to his beliefs. “I don't talk about my Christian faith in class, but I do say, you know, ‘I went to church last Sunday’. If they ask me, I'll say ‘Yes, I'm a Christian’.”

One recurring theme that surfaced during the interviews was Walter's relationship to the professional ELT community. He has been actively involved in strictly secular education organizations and teaching groups. However, he has been harangued and attacked by a lot of people for bringing his faith into discussions of teaching:

Well, at one time I was very active in two different – three different teacher online forums. And, every time it was constant conflict. Constant conflict. The teaching community, the EFL, particularly the EFL teaching community in Japan is, generally speaking, aggressively hostile to Christian faith. The problem was, in my experience, was that the people responsible for managing those forums were actually part of that aggressive hostility. So that, it wasn't just me standing up against the crowd, it was me being condemned by the entire association. ...Sure, you're isolated, as a Christian, as a man of faith in a godless community, but people will respect that. (Walter)

Unlike Walter, Henry has been formally trained as a pastor/missionary. He opened his school for the primary purpose of Christian mission. He partnered with a local church, which supported him for most of the rent he was paying on the school building. In fact, his school

building used to be the church building, so it has the appearance of a church from the outside, including a big red neon cross, and the words “Christ Church” clearly visible on the front. “There’s the big neon cross, which is kind of a mixed blessing. It’s easy to find, but I think it puts people off. They still think this is a church here, and because they think it’s a church they don’t really want to take an English class here. Perhaps because it’s Christian or perhaps because they have an image of what a church English class is about. So – but there’s no way to measure that.” Demonstrating a degree of narrative reflexivity, Henry first declares the reason why his school has not attracted as many students as he had hoped, but then acknowledges the difficulty in substantiating that claim.

Even though the neon cross may be off-putting, Henry sees his school’s connection with a church as being very important. “I think that a school should always be connected to a church or two. Because you ultimately want to lead [students] to a local body of Christ, so when you’re setting up the school you should probably somehow cooperate with the local churches in doing that.” The familiar use of the word ‘you’ indicates a conscious acknowledgement that the interviewer shares the same Christian and pedagogical orientations as the speaker. When Henry shares this advice, he is not speaking to a disinterested third party, but to a member of his own inner circle.

Although his primary aim is to “reach people for Christ”, Henry says he doesn’t evangelize or have any bible teaching in his classes. However, if an issue related to the Christian faith comes up naturally, he will explore that further. “Then those kind of natural opportunities I’ll take to bring in a Christian perspective, biblical teaching on something. But it has to be very natural.” The most overt way he promotes the church is by hanging posters. “The other things are concerts or Christmas parties that [the church] has, you know. I’ll advertise here. I have a display case out there, so youth centre activities, church activities, you know.” Ultimately, Henry hopes to have a positive influence on the lives of his students. The school’s catch phrase is “A better way to learn. A better way to live.” Henry says, “So it’s not just about learning English, but also learning about a better way to live, as a Christian, as God’s child. ... That’s ultimately what I hope to teach.” So when it comes to young learners, he tries his best to demonstrate the love and grace of God:

I would never get angry. Some teachers at my daughter’s elementary school are famous for yelling and getting angry. But no, right. This is a Christian school, so I represent – I guess God in some ways, to them. You know, there’s that saying, ‘You’re the only bible

some people are ever going to read.’ You know. And so, I want to conduct all my business, my life, in a way that reflects favorably on my Lord Jesus Christ. And that includes disciplining kids. So do it in a firm but loving way. (Henry)

Jim is in a similar situation to Henry. To all appearances, the two men are employed in the same occupation. Both founded an English school and teach there, both receive all their income from the school (rather than funding from a missions organization), both are linked to a local church, and both seek to lead their students to Christ. However, the two men discursively construct their identities in a diametrically opposite way. Henry sees himself as a teacher and not a missionary, while Jim asserts that he is a missionary and not a teacher. Henry states, “I don’t call myself a missionary ... I’m a professional English teacher, with a school. And so I’m doing what I hope any Christian worker would do anywhere in the world. Which is, you know, share their faith with whoever they’re coming in contact with.” In contrast, Jim repeatedly asserted that he was “a missionary”, and that running an English school was merely his *modus operandi*.

We don’t use it in our ads, but when we talk with people we say it’s our mission to care about the children. We don’t hide the fact we’re missionaries. But we don’t advertise it either. I mean, we’ll put [the Christian fish symbol] on our ad, or on the website and different things. We’re pretty open about us being Christian. We’re just not religious about it. (Jim)

Yet it was clear there was a complex relationship between Jim’s self-identification as a missionary and his identity in the community as a teacher. He mentioned later that when it comes to adopting standards of practice, he rejected the way of the missionary for the way of the teacher. “I decided to take the approach of a professional, as a teacher, rather than as a missionary.” This suggests that while Jim firmly identifies himself as a missionary, he finds it expedient to adhere to the professional standards of the EFL industry.

Consequently, he doesn’t have regular bible teaching or prayer in his classes. “There has always been a common theme within [church English classes] to have a very low price, to always pray, to always have a bible study. The three together, I have found to be very difficult.” However, if a relevant cultural opportunity arises for speaking about Christ, Jim will use that.

OK, holidays come around, and I decide in my school to do the whole time period on the faith of Jesus Christ. It’s my school. I can do that. I can take the whole time period and explain the birth of Jesus Christ, and who Santa is in relation to Jesus. We did that for two lessons. (Jim)

However, on rare occasions, Jim says he openly discusses his faith during regular class time. When this happens, it's always unplanned, and he waives the class fee. He recalls a private lesson, when his student was in some distress and needed counselling.

And so, I mean there have been times that I have counselled someone, and I just crossed out the date for the private lesson, and I said, 'Nah, this one's on me. We're talking. I'm going to share my faith with you. I don't charge for this.' And so I shared the faith. I laid out how Jesus gives us strength, and how he needed that strength in his life to overcome some of these issues. And also how to help his friend. And the private lesson ended up just being me witnessing to him, and I said, 'I can't charge you for this.' The gospel is free. (Jim)

While the school owners may have such flexibility, the teaching staff participants do not.

The Teaching Staff

Sketch of participants. Elizabeth is around fifty years old, and has a Master's degree in TESOL with over thirty years working in the ELT profession. Currently, she's teaching English at a Christian women's university. Darlene also has a Master's in TESOL. She's in her 20s and is working now as an assistant language teacher at a state run junior high school.

Outline of teaching context. Both these ladies are employed by a school. Elizabeth's school is a Christian University, so there are chapel services and formal religious instruction on campus. There is a blanket prohibition on teaching any religion in state run schools, so Darlene is a lot more restricted in how she can bring her faith into the classroom.

Personal narratives of faith and pedagogy. One of the main ways in which Elizabeth expresses her faith is through fundraising activities. She gets involved in various different projects and enlists the help of her students. Theologically, Elizabeth stands upon the idea of "God is my boss", which is an understanding which undergirds all of her work. Even on her business cards she has the words "Colossians 3:23", which states: 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.' The following interview segment demonstrates how Elizabeth sees this as working out in practice.

Elizabeth: But, there are a lot of things I do that I feel is because I'm a Christian. Like I believe that God is my boss. (Laughs).

Paul: Yeah, yeah.

Elizabeth: ... So that's always at the back of my mind, that –

Paul: – that God is your boss, and you're working to please God.

Elizabeth: Absolutely. And you know, he's always there, and I've got to absolutely do my best all the time. That's at the back of my mind. Little things – even using school facilities and you know, photocopying, everything. I just keep thinking, 'This is God's.' The way I use it, you know. Often I'll think, you know, I'm teaching at another school, I need to make copies here. And I think, 'No, no. This is for this school. I'm not going to cut corners and stuff'.

Here, I (as the interviewer) interjected myself into the conversation, expressing agreement and indicating that we had a mutually familiar outlook. Elizabeth was then encouraged to elaborate, and give a concrete example of how this idea of God as “boss” worked itself out in her world of work. This idea resonated deeply with me. We both conceptualize secular employment in terms of the divine mandate to do good works and express Christian faith, which benefits the individual and society as a whole (sometimes referred to as the Protestant work ethic).

During English lessons, Elizabeth says she doesn't witness explicitly to the students or talk extensively about her faith. “At a university – I mean, although it is a [Christian] mission school, in a sense they shouldn't be surprised if we did talk about – but I think it's – it's not, I hesitate to say it's not sort of fair on them.” A number of hedging devices and false starts in this utterance suggests that Elizabeth felt some reluctance about expressing her view that explicitly bringing faith into the classroom was “not fair” to the students. Perhaps this is not yet a firm belief, or perhaps she feels that this is a contentious opinion. Elizabeth does, however, lead a bible study group. Once a week, she meets students in the university café, and they work through a bible study together. Elizabeth also uses writing tasks to stimulate reflection on deeper issues. Her university has a retreat in the summer, and also chapel services during the week. She will set writing tasks that ask students to reflect on the retreat or the chapel service. So Elizabeth's students are encouraged to think somewhat deeply about the Christian messages they're hearing, and respond in some way.

Darlene is much younger than Elizabeth. She says she never felt attracted towards the teaching profession. She seems to have been pushed into that by her circumstances. When asked whether she feels some compulsion to tell people about her faith, Darlene said, “Absolutely. I want to evangelize.” But she finds it difficult:

When I have opportunities to say things or do things that might hint towards my beliefs, I take that opportunity. Like – if a teacher, 'What did you do on Sunday?'. 'I went to church.' And even if I just say that, it may be like, oh well, if they think I'm a cool teacher, 'Oh, you go to church. What's church like?' If even I can spark an idea. But as

far as going out and handing someone a testimony and trying to talk to them, I haven't done that so much. Basically, because of the language barrier. But also because I don't feel it's my place. I don't feel it's my gift to do that. So if it becomes real to me later on that it is what I'm supposed to do, well OK. But I'm definitely going to need some guidance on how to do that. (Darlene)

Darlene was the youngest person I interviewed, and seemed to be still in the process of working out this dilemma of desiring to evangelize, and yet feeling restrained by the system and a lack of confidence in her ability to speak for Christ. The following extract expresses the heart of her dilemma:

But there's that fear. Like, I don't want to shove it down people's throats. Because I've seen people shove it down other people's throats. And it doesn't go over very well. I want – I don't feel like I'm doing enough, but I'm scared to try and push it too much. At least, in the school system I'm really apprehensive to jump out there, and, 'Hey! Do you know anything about Jesus? Do you want me to tell you about Jesus?' 'Cause, as far as I know I'm actually not allowed to do that. So, how do I integrate, how do I show the kids that I am a Christian and that the way I'm doing things is because I am a Christian? How do I make that message clear? And that part I have not gotten, I haven't figured it out or I haven't gotten to the point where I'm comfortable with it yet. And it's really, really frustrating. ...What more can I do? What should I be doing? (Darlene)

Darlene's final rhetorical question seems to have been offered as a cry for help or for guidance in navigating a path through the lived worlds of faith and pedagogy, a path that does not yet seem to have been figured out.

Discussion

In their study of evangelical trainee teachers preparing to enter the ELT field, Varghese and Johnston (2007) made the following observations. Firstly, many were wrestling with the dilemma of wanting to witness (i.e., share their faith) on the one hand, yet also wanting to adhere to professional standards of conduct on the other. Secondly, a number of the participants saw witnessing as an activity that needed to be separate from teaching. The results of the present study will be discussed in light of these observations.

Firstly, Varghese and Johnston (2007) observe: "it was evident that witnessing is not a clear, cut-and-dried matter, but that each informant struggled with what it was supposed to entail" (p. 18). This could be said to hold true for Darlene, who was only a few years older than the respondents interviewed by Varghese and Johnston. She had not yet resolved her identity as

a Christian English language teacher. The other older participants, however, spoke with confidence and certainty about their ideas on evangelism and its relationship with ELT professionalism. They all agreed that explicit evangelism had no place in the classroom, but were willing to participate in evangelistic activities outside of school. Showing care and love to their students was seen as sufficient in itself as a witnessing tool. Perhaps with age and experience teachers develop a clearer sense of what constitutes professional conduct, and how their personal beliefs can be outworked legitimately within a secular organizational framework.

Secondly, Varghese and Johnston's (2007) participants believed that "seeing their teaching as part of their religious faith did not mean preaching to their students or even telling the students about their faith" (p. 21). The same can be said for the participants in the present study, somewhat surprisingly. All five participants did not regularly seek to evangelize during class time. They did not plan regular lessons with the goal of teaching Christianity, nor did they pray or use bibles or deliberately try to steer the lesson content towards spiritual matters. This is despite the fact that all the participants had a strong evangelical faith and greatly desired their students to come to know Christ. Even Henry and Jim, who have strong links with a local church and are very upfront about their religious activities, did not systematically include Christian teaching in lessons. On the infrequent occasions when Jim did share his faith, he also chose not to charge students for those lessons.

Yet that is not to say that participants never expressed their beliefs to students. To these teachers, performing their jobs with respect, honor and love was the best way they could display their belief in Christ. None of the participants tried to hide their religious convictions, and so when the subject arose as a natural part of the lesson, they would confess their faith. Such practices as enforcing discipline, showing genuine love and concern for students, putting effort into lesson planning, offering advice and counsel to those who asked for it, and designing lesson materials to encourage deeper reflection on life issues were all part of how these teachers expressed their faith through pedagogical practice.

The present age is one where notions of relativism and subjectivity reign supreme. Any person or group that claims to believe in 'objective truth' or 'absolute moral standards' may be viewed as suspicious or naïve at best, and incendiary at worst. The certainty that comes with religious belief is viewed as a threat to the prevailing order (Edge, 1996, p. 21). While Varghese and Johnston (2007) are not as alarmist as other scholars, they still maintain that the

values of evangelical Christianity put it at odds with the wider ELT community: “Although the teachers we spoke with declared their respect for other values, we would argue that part of respecting someone else’s culture involves letting them continue to hold their own spiritual values, and that to have as one’s aim (whether overt or covert) the conversion of others to one’s own beliefs is in fact inimical to the kind of multiculturalism embraced by TESOL and by its nonevangelical members” (p. 27). And yet, is this really a tenable position? Consider two extreme non-ELT examples of spiritual values: widow-burning in India and female genital mutilation in Africa. If these topics emerged as part of an English class, would it be possible to listen silently to students explain their support for such practices without trying to get them to examine those beliefs? Surely, a better approach than simply designating all values as ‘off-limits’ for dialogue is to open up our classrooms to reason and debate. As argued by Canagarajah (2009) and others, sharing our beliefs and values in an attitude of mutual respect, through constructive dialogue, begets positive social and spiritual transformation. The five teachers in this study expressed their desire to do just that.

These teachers understand that putting a bible in the hands of a student who expects an English textbook is unscrupulous. It is somewhat paradoxical that it appears from this study that a strong Christian faith is exactly what prevents strident evangelism in class. More than winning converts, the primary goal of a Christian is to become Christ-like. This involves having a sincere love for one’s neighbour (colleague or student) and pursuing growth in Christian virtues such as honesty, kindness, generosity and others. Any underhanded attempts to manipulate the classroom in order to make converts would be in violation of pursuing Christ-likeness. Added to this is the evangelical belief in God as absolute and sovereign. God is the author and perfecter of faith. Ultimately, it is God who calls people and God who grants salvation. Professional Christian EFL teachers recognize that no amount of manipulation, arguing, goading or pressuring can bring a person to faith in Christ. As such, they can address spiritual issues if they arise naturally in the lesson, without deliberately planning or carrying out a systematic strategy of evangelism.

Conclusion

Much has been written and debated (with varying degrees of hostility) about the relationship between Christianity and ELT. Yet the intensity of the rhetoric has not been

matched by a similar level of empirical research. The current study is by no means an end to the debate. As only five teachers from one socio-cultural context were interviewed, results cannot be generalized to Christians working in the ELT field globally. In addition, there may be some discrepancy between how these teachers self-reported their actions, and what actually occurs in their EFL classrooms.

Possible directions for future research could include interviews with students of Christian teachers and teaching observations, which would give a more complete picture. Even so, from this study, we can see that these teachers purport to adhere to a high standard of professional conduct which I conclude does not put them at odds with the wider TESOL field, contrary to Varghese and Johnston's (2007) conclusion. The way these participants express their beliefs would arguably be similar to the way non-Christian teachers would express their beliefs, whether it be in the ideas of democracy, human rights, liberalism, or any other ideology that we all, as teachers, carry with us. Of course, we should be aware of issues of power in the classroom and be careful not to abuse that power. But when everyone, teachers and students alike, can express their beliefs with freedom and openness, our classrooms can become catalysts for positive social change. It is hoped that this article has made some progress in documenting how this is being done by one small segment in ELT.

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Is English a Force for Good or Bad?

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Abstract

A survey of university students in China and Kuwait asked for their opinions about the effects of English on various aspects of their life and world: personal character and morals, material well-being, spiritual or religious development, family ties, local social change, international peace or conflict, and international interpersonal harmony. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Both the literature review and specific comments by some respondents suggest positive effects of English that can be encouraged and negative ones that may be countered through language policy, curriculum and materials, or classroom teachers. I also offer suggestions for future research and classroom teachers.

Key words: China, EFL, Kuwait, language attitudes, social values, World Englishes

Introduction

American Christians often hold up the world's desire to learn English as a good thing, as it opens doors for Christian English teachers to teach and build relationships with students from around the world, speaking to them about spiritual truth and positive values. For example, Tennant (2002) wrote, "Teaching English may well be the 21st century's most promising way to take the gospel to the world," in an article about the ultimate language lesson (p. 33).

Another positive impact English may have is that it can also play a major role in the development of a nation (Coleman, 2010). One factor is the income gained from international business, international tourism, students studying abroad and returning with greater earning power, and migrants working abroad and sending remittances home. All of these require some use of English as an international language. A second way English contributes to development occurs when English is a means of international cooperation, for example in bodies like the U.N. or events such as disaster relief. This is related to the third role of English in development – accessing information, whether it is from a scientific journal or a W.H.O. conference. Fourthly, English can be an impartial language in multilingual contexts where ethnic tensions threaten development. Examples given by Coleman (2010) include English-medium instruction at Kabul University in Afghanistan serving students who speak Dari, Pashto, or many minority languages at home; post-conflict programs in Sri Lanka bringing together Tamil and Sinhala speakers; and

distance education community development and health programs run by an exile opposition group seeking to reach the 34 different armed ethnic groups in Burma. Friedrich (2007b) gives another example from India, where “English has become an element of peace...between the different states, religious orientations and cultural affiliations that are so intricately connected to the local languages” (p. 43).

Besides helping groups of people communicate with each other, English is also a means for individuals to better understand each other. Peace Camps for Japanese, Chinese, and Korean young people are conducted in English (Eberly, 2010). A curriculum for young people in Southeast Europe (where there has been much ethnic tension) called *Living Together* is in both local languages and English (British Council, n.d.).

At the same time, English brings the potential for negative consequences as well (Master, 1998). One is a widening gap between rich and poor. According to Graddol (2006), a positive economic effect of English happens when it provides access to global knowledge and to jobs that entail customers and colleagues sharing a common language; however, English has also become “one of the main mechanisms for structuring inequality in developing economies” (p. 40). Our enthusiasm for English must be moderated with concern for those who cannot easily access it, says Coleman (2010).

A second negative consequence occurs when English is the medium of education without adequate teacher training or school resources. In Nigeria, for example, young learners are taught school subjects in English, which they do not know very well, thus preventing them from mastering basic content. Adamo (2005) says this practice contributes both to low levels of educational achievement in individuals as well as “the underdevelopment of Nigeria” (p. 24).

Thirdly, English is often associated (at least in people’s opinions) with western media and values such as materialism, consumerism, and self-indulgence. Research done in China, for example, found that “frequent exposure to Western media content was ... related to increased hedonistic pursuits and individualistic values among urban Chinese” (Chaffee, Pan, & Chu 1997, cited in Paek & Pan 2004, p. 494). Xie, Fung, and Erni (2006) also found connections between foreign media consumption and materialist values. Yang (2007) writes that China has become more vulnerable to violence and eroticism because of western media. I have noticed in my travels in North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia in the last few years, a proliferation of satellite dishes and of shops selling DVDs of shows like *Prison*

Break, Desperate Housewives, and Gossip Girls. Students with excellent English explained that they had learned the language by watching such shows. I wondered whether the impact of these shows might be better English but worse morals.

Finally, families may also be affected when the pressure to learn English is too high. In Korea, what are known as “wild geese families” are increasing – 400,000 school children living outside Korea, usually with their mother, but not their father, in order to learn English (Onishi, 2008). These families have chosen to split up in order to give the children a better chance at avoiding the pressure-cooker of Korean schools and at speaking English well. “The allure of English,” writes Piller (2010), compels people to “trade close family bonds for high levels of proficiency.” In these cases, English, in a broad sense, would seem to have a negative effect on their family life.

Economic inequality, educational failure, materialism, hedonism, and family divisions are clearly not values that belong in the kingdom of God. I have to question whether by teaching English I am promoting these negatives more than the good that English might bring. How then should Christians approach English language teaching? With eager anticipation for its potential to open up doors to the gospel and to personal or national development, or with fear and trembling because of its potential to open doors to all kinds of ills?

I am not the only one asking these questions. For example, a government official in Singapore, Goh Chok Tang, opened Parliament in 1989 by saying:

Singapore is wide open to external influences. Millions of foreign visitors pass through each year. Books, magazines, tapes, and television programmes pour into Singapore every day. Most are from the developed countries of the West. The overwhelming bulk is in English. Because of universal English education, a new generation of Singaporeans absorbs their contents immediately, without translation or filtering. This openness has made us a cosmopolitan people, and put us in close touch with new ideas and technologies from abroad. But it has also exposed us to alien lifestyles and values. Under this pressure, in less than a generation, attitudes and outlooks of Singaporeans, especially younger Singaporeans, have shifted. Traditional Asian ideas of morality, duty and society which have sustained and guided us in the past are giving way to a more Westernized, individualistic, and self-centred outlook on life. (cited in Vaish, 2008, p. 450)

To investigate this contradiction between potentially good and ill effects of English, I used the opportunity of travels in 2011 in China and Kuwait to survey university students on their perceptions of the effects of English on their lives.

Literature Review

Research on how learners feel about English and its effects covers some broad ground. Evans (2010) surveyed Chinese students' attitudes toward English varieties, e.g., British or American. Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan's (2009) survey of Kuwaiti students focused on the importance of studying English and their preferences for classroom methods such as the use of computers in class or a focus on technical rather than general vocabulary. Some researchers have investigated the impact English has on motivation to study third languages, e.g., Hungarian students studying French, German, or Russian (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006) or Swedish students studying German (Henry, 2010).

One study with results that illuminate how students think English might be impacting them or their world is by Ryan (2009). He was interested in the experience of English learners in Japan, where "the language poses no obvious threat nor offers the prospect of any immediate material rewards," but where learners often claim that they "like English" (p. 405). Some of the responses of female students in university and graduate studies indicated that they are able to express their emotions in English. Ryan interprets this to mean that English, compared to the gendered codes and formalized registers of Japanese, offers more freedom of expression. Other responses were about times of transition. Ryan (2009) hypothesizes that English provides a ready-made opportunity to fulfill oneself with a new challenge or direction in life. Finally, responses about social status and English were ambiguous. It seems that the respondents felt that speaking English in a classroom setting comes across as "stupid," while speaking English in the real world is considered "cool" (p. 417). Ryan (2009) sums up his research by saying that the status of English does not mean it is always admired nor are the values associated with English always identified as positive.

Although the primary focus of Gao, Cheng, Zhao, and Zhou's (2005) study of more than 2000 Chinese college students across the mainland was whether their study of English resulted in additive or subtractive bilingualism, the researchers also asked about self-confidence. Items in their survey included, "English learning has a great impact on my self-confidence" and "Whenever I have overcome a difficulty in English learning, I can feel my own growth" (p. 42). Nearly 70% of the respondents agreed with these statements. Another item relevant to the present research was, "After learning English, I'm often caught between contradicting values and beliefs" (p. 42), with which 11.5% agreed, 20.2% were uncertain, and 68.3% disagreed.

Several studies have looked at English in the Muslim world. Malay students aged 17-19 years in an elite school in Brunei were surveyed by O'Hara-Davies (2010) in light of the complexities of that nation's colonial past, bilingual education, and Islamic identity. Several themes emerged regarding what English does, has, and is. One was a strong recognition that English is needed in the global modern world, linked to "success, modernity, technology, job opportunities and access to knowledge" (p. 111). Another theme was the contradictory view that English can "further the cause of intercultural, international and inter-religious harmony" while also "creat[ing] and/or perpetuat[ing] elitism and alienat[ing] its users from their own culture and people" (p. 111). Participants expressed some concern about "the possible dilution of cultures such as their own by the encroachment of Western culture" (p. 113). O'Hara-Davies writes, "Participants were wary of some of the cultural associations of the English language which could put them in conflict with their religious beliefs and their own cultural heritage. One interviewee conceded that while she did not find this a problem on a personal level, 'Western culture (is) bad for my religion maybe'" (p. 115). O'Hara-Davies (2010) sums up her research suggesting that "English is not a colonial burden but a legacy that they are making their own and using to pave the way to a brighter future" (p. 116).

Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) surveyed more than 1000 Saudi university students in light of the "sense of fear among the Saudis that the use of English entails Westernization, and detachment from the country, and is a source of corruption to their religious commitment" (p. 308). The respondents were ambivalent about some statements related to English and Westernization, for example, whether the promotion of English in Saudi Arabia is for "imperialistic purposes," whether the use of English is a sign of "cultural advancement," whether learning English will protect the nation from "backwardness," or whether English is a threat to Arabic, Arab unity, or Arab identity (p. 310). They were a little more unified in their opinions about "learning English is an indication of Westernization" and "care for English entails care for and imitation of Western culture," as about two-thirds disagreed with these statements (p. 312). There were several questions related to the effects of English on personal religion. 17% said that learning English makes a Muslim less pious and 19% said it spoils one's religious commitment. 82% agreed that English is necessary for preaching Islam to non-Muslims. The authors find this is in agreement with Islamic teachings that encourage the quest for knowledge in general and the

learning of foreign languages in particular. They conclude that most participants believe that they can use English while still being attached to their religion, their country, and national identity.

Though not a survey, Mahboob's (2009) research comes to a similar conclusion. He looked at the discourse of Pakistani English in light of the association of English with colonialism and the relationship between Christianity and TESOL. He writes in his introduction of several problems for Muslims learning English. One is how "some TESOL practitioners see teaching English as a way to spread the love of Jesus Christ" (p. 176). Another is that the native-speaker model for teachers adds to "strong Christian undertones/overtone of the classroom... Although these classrooms did not impart Christianity in any official manner, their discourses were strongly in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which worked on the premise of promoting Western cultures and ways of thought" (p. 176). Mahboob phrases his questions this way:

Considering that the ESL classroom was and still is steeped in the values and cultures of Christianity in many countries, and that the English language continues to spread messages of the subordinate status of people of color and especially Islamic cultures and Muslim peoples, the obvious questions that need to be asked are: Of what use is English to the Muslim world? Can English be forged to make it a language "friendly" to Islam? How can that be done if English is still a tool of the former colonizer and is intertwined with messages of Christian superiority and Muslim inferiority? (p. 177)

Mahboob's data come from a variety of sources: English language textbooks used in Pakistan, the acknowledgements sections of some MA and PhD dissertations, and previous studies of Pakistani English. He provides lexical, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse examples (for example, a textbook reading about Islam as the religion of peace, or a thesis that acknowledges the help of Allah) of Pakistani English. Mahboob (2009) concludes that in Pakistan today English, in fact, "represent[s] a language of opposition to colonial discourses...represents Islamic values and embodies South Asian Islamic sensitivities" (p. 188).

Finally, the effects of English on religion in multicultural Singapore were explored by Vaish (2008). Data came from a survey of 10-year old Singaporean school children, stratified as Chinese, Indian, and Malay. Through a survey of 700 children and follow-up interviews and observations with 12 children, the researchers explored, "who speaks what language to whom in what context with what attitude with what level of fluency and to what end?" (p. 454). Children across all ethnic groups use English as their dominant language in the domains of school, media, and public space. However, English is not as widely used in the domains of family and friends and of religion. Vaish's article focuses mostly on religion, describing survey questions which

included, “What languages do you usually use to pray?” (specifying prayer in a house of worship, at home, and silently) and “What languages do you usually use to learn about religion?” Results indicate the Malay Muslims use Arabic as the language of prayer and both Arabic and Malay in religious instruction. For Indian Hindus, Tamil and Sanskrit are used in temples and Tamil and English are used in religious instruction. For Chinese, Mandarin is the primary language for Buddhists and English for the Christians. Vaish concludes that for each of these groups, each of these languages provides a way of maintaining cultural traditions.

The Inquiry

The present study sought to address the research question, “How do university students perceive the effects of English on their lives?” by surveying students in China and Kuwait. Four survey questions were about the students personally, that is, the effect of English on their:

- Personal character and morals
- Spiritual or religious development
- Family ties
- Material well-being

Three survey questions related more broadly to their views of the effect of English on:

- Social change
- Conflict and peace among nations
- Interpersonal harmony

There were 315 survey participants in China and 386 in Kuwait, facilitated by a variety of teachers I knew who were willing to hand out surveys in their classes on a given day while I was visiting. The Kuwait data came from non-English majors studying science at a major university. The respondents were 18-25 years old, mostly 18 and 19, and were roughly 55% women and 45% men. The China data came from English majors in a major university in south central China. They were freshmen, juniors, and seniors, aged 19 to 23, mostly female.

The survey is found in the Appendix. It was translated into Arabic for use in Kuwait, thanks to some very helpful staff members. (The staff also translated the students’ comments back into English for me.) It was given in English in China, since the administration felt that the students, as English majors, would be able to read it without trouble. The surveys were given to instructors who then distributed them in their classes.

For each question, respondents circled a number on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 and 2 being positive, 3 being neutral, and 4 and 5 being negative. When I analyzed results, I calculated the percentage of respondents who indicated that English had no effect on the issue (that is, they chose 3), the percentage of respondents who were positive (choosing 1 or 2), and the percentage who were negative (choosing 4 or 5).

A few of the respondents added written comments. To analyze these I highlighted them for repetition or themes. I also divided them into comments that (1) explain a positive response, (2) explain a negative response, and (3) seem to indicate a misunderstanding of the question. For the findings section, I chose comments that represent these three perspectives, in order to give a more complete picture of some of the respondents' opinions.

Findings

Overall Picture

Overall, respondents were very positive about English. Table 1 shows a summary of the China responses. The prevalence of black bars indicates positive responses. The Chinese did not choose the neutral option very often so there is less light gray. There is just a little dark gray, indicating few negative responses about the effects of English – less than 10% for all questions.

Table 1. *Summary of Responses from Chinese students*

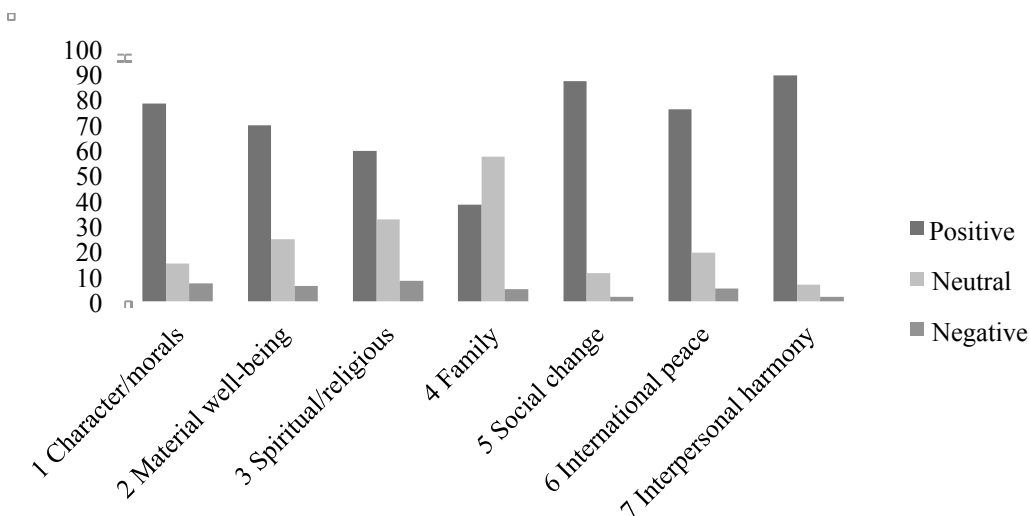
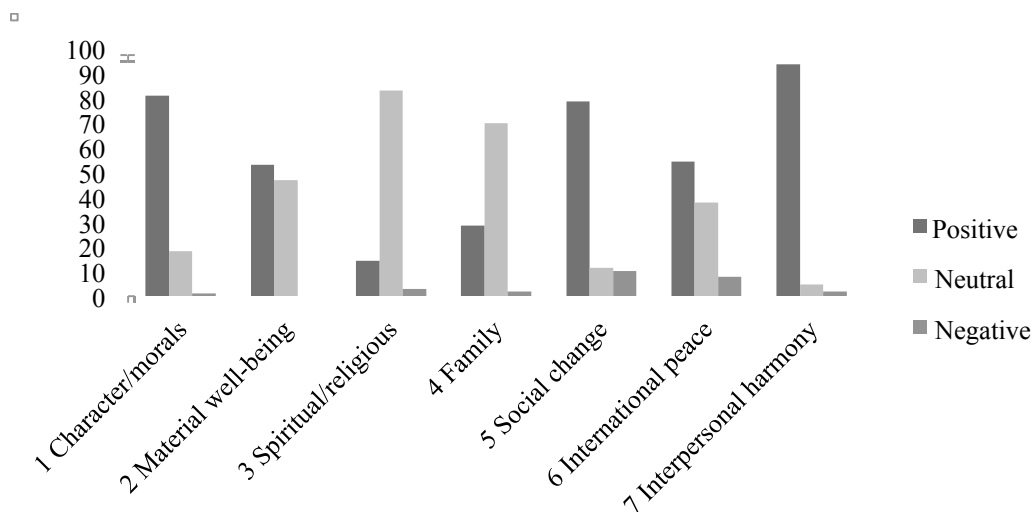


Table 2 provides a summary of the Kuwait responses. The black bars again show that the majority of responses referred to participants’ responses on the positive effects of English. There were also quite a few responses that indicated English had no effect or was neutral in regard to an issue – more in Kuwait than in China. The light gray bars show this was especially true for spiritual or religious development and for family ties. Finally, there were even fewer respondents in Kuwait than in China who felt English had negative effects or was harmful in any way. The gray bars show that at most 10% marked this option, in regards to social change.

Table 2. *Summary of Responses from Kuwaiti Students*



In spite of the translation into Arabic and the Chinese university’s confidence that English majors would have no trouble understanding the survey, it was obvious that some respondents had some trouble with the questions. For example, in response to “What is the effect of English on your personal character and morals?” one Chinese student wrote, “I can English a little.” Another wrote, “I hope there will be less examinations.” A Kuwaiti student wrote, “It helps in communicating with foreigners.”

Specific Questions and Responses

1. What is the effect of English on your personal character and morals?

78.1% of the Chinese respondents indicated English had a positive effect, 14.9% that it had no effect, and 7.0% that it had a negative effect. About 100 out of the 386 respondents wrote additional comments.

While more than half of the 100 or so comments were confusing or irrelevant in my opinion, several helped clarify their responses. The comments show that Chinese students often saw this question in terms of personality, rather than morality. *Confidence, courage, or bravery* was mentioned by 16 (similar to Gao et al.'s (2005) results). Five mentioned that English made them more outgoing. Four used the words *easy-going* or *relaxed*. Four mentioned *broadened horizons* or *accepting new things*. The following were also noted: *hardworking, creative, open, patient, careful, steadfast, friendly, enjoying life*, and “*becoming a man.*”

Eight Chinese framed their comments not as who they had become but as what they admired in foreigners, including: *open, friendly, frank, encouraging, hardworking, religious, and smiling*. Five Chinese students spoke in general about being inspired by the literature, movies, or heroes they had encountered in English classes. Unfortunately, none of the comments helped explain the 7% who indicated that English has had a negative effect on their character or morals.

Kuwaiti respondents were more positive than the Chinese, with more than 80.8% choosing a positive response and only 1.0% choosing a negative response. 18.1% were neutral. Not very many of them wrote additional comments, but the comments still elucidate the responses.

I had worded the question in terms of “character and morals” to emphasize my intended meaning of being a person of integrity and ethical behavior. However, three comments along the lines of “it makes the character stronger, but it doesn’t affect the morals” show that “character” seems to have meant something different to some respondents. For example, nine Kuwaitis mentioned *confidence* or *courage*. Three mentioned *social life* or *sociable*. Two mentioned *having the appearance of being well-educated*. Finally, two mentioned *discernment*: “It depends on the person himself and how much he is affected by the West.” “I learn the good things and ignore the bad ones.”

This last comment highlights one way Christian teachers might help their students cope with the variety of input they are getting in the world, in English as well as other languages – identify and choose what is good, and try to disregard what is bad. Our role as teachers of critical thinking is important here. The students who wrote about being inspired by those they had watched or read about in English classes also remind us of the value of the materials we choose, when possible.

2. What is the effect of English on your material well-being (rich or poor)?

Chinese students were generally positive about this effect of English, with 69.5% marking a positive response and 24.4% being neutral. 6.0%, however, were on the negative side. This might be explained by some comments that indicated misunderstanding (e.g., “Some material translated into English is out of original meaning.”). Other negative choices were because respondents weren’t thinking of the future. “Now I am a student,” wrote one person who marked the item on the negative side. Finally, four respondents made comments such as this one, reflecting a painful Chinese reality: “Maybe it’s hard to find a good job because of the intensive competition.” However, of the approximately 100 comments, more than half were about good jobs in the future. The specific jobs mentioned by these English majors who live near a major national park included tour guide, teacher, and working for a foreign company. Seven respondents also mentioned current jobs, especially tutoring English.

The Kuwaiti students are more likely to have government-guaranteed jobs for life. Not one person indicated a negative effect of English on material well-being. Among the 46.9% who felt that English was irrelevant to this wrote things like, “It doesn’t affect because being rich has a relation with GOD Almighty,” and “Being poor or rich has a relation with the personality, work and being clever.” The 53.1% who felt that English had a positive effect on one’s material well-being wrote things like, “Many jobs prefer people who speak English even if he/she doesn’t have experience.” “It’s the common language, so it’ll give you more chances to have a job.”

Christian teachers might assume that our students come to English classes with material well-being in mind. While it is true that English can help a person get a better job, most students know that riches are not guaranteed. Ways to deal with the economic uncertainty of today’s world, the blessing but elusiveness of wealth, and appropriate ways to use money might be important topics for our students to consider as we have opportunity in our classes.

3. What is the effect of English on your spiritual or religious development?

This question generated a relatively wide spread of opinions among the Chinese students. 59.4% said English had a positive effect, 8.2% were negative, and 32.4 were neutral. There were nearly 80 comments, but, again, nearly half were hard to understand and the others consisted of a variety of statements that only partially explain the numbers.

Fourteen Chinese students wrote, “I’m not interested in religion.” Four said, “I won’t change what I believe.” Four wrote about others, for example, “I notice that other countries pay more attention to religion.” “We know more about beliefs in English-speaking countries.” Seven mentioned that they were “inspired” by literature, movies, historical heroes, etc. Three used the word “spiritual” as in: “It really makes me spiritual.” “I like the spiritual of American.” “Broadens my spiritual vision.” One wrote: “I have a better understanding about the morals which helps me be a civilized person.”

Eight people referred to the Bible, perhaps because their university requires English majors to take a class in the Bible as Literature. “English makes me know Bible, God, Christ.” “By studying Bible I became more spiritual.” “I know more about Christ from Bible class.” (One of these respondents noted she was a Christian.) Other comments about the Bible were along different lines. “The Bible is too hard for us to learn it.” “‘God bless you’ works well.” “It makes me believe that ‘Tomorrow will be better’ in the Bible.”

The response of the Kuwaiti students to this question was quite different. 82.9% said English had no effect. Comments such as “It doesn’t affect my religion because my religion depends on Arabic” or “It has no relation with any religion” are to be expected in a strongly Muslim context. 14.2% were positive and 2.8% were negative. There were four other comments that I found interesting. Two implied spreading Islam: “I can use it in inviting people to Islam.” “To communicate with other religions.” Two implied an openness to dialogue: “To find out about religions.” “When my knowledge changes, the way I see my religion changes, too. So I could see different points of view in my knowledge, but it doesn’t go against my religion.”

Question three is key for Christian teachers who have gone into the field with a desire to have a positive influence on students’ spiritual lives. The results show teachers at universities in China that there is tremendous potential for this to occur, but also potential for misunderstanding. For those teaching in the Muslim world, “seeing different points of view” seems to be an important initial perspective for our students.

4. What is the effect of English on your family ties (i.e., how close you are to family members)?

As expected, most (57.1%) of the Chinese respondents indicated that English had no effect on their family. About 60% of the comments included things like, “We only speak Chinese in my family.” The other comments were quite interesting to me and help explain the 38.1% who

were positive about the effects of English on their family ties as well as the nearly 4.8% who said it had a negative effect. Seven people wrote of helping family members with English, for example, “I can chat with my younger brother in English so that it can improve his English level.” Five people wrote about fulfilling family obligations: “My family expects me to study English well. If I master English, they will feel happy.” Three people explained that English provides a bonding experience: “We have a common interest in English.” “We watch English movies together.” “I could tell my family members some funny things happened in other countries which will make them very excited and it can help me closer to my family.”

One Chinese respondent, explaining a negative choice, wrote, “English stresses the individual.” However, sixteen wrote about new and positive ideas about family relationships they had learned or wanted to emulate: “Many foreigners has a close relationship with family.” “I learn how to deal with the relationship among my family ties.” “Affect by English culture, I feel that family members are the most important person.” “American people treat their families as their friends. I like it.” “Like Mother’s Day, our family will celebrate some foreign festival.” “I will show my love to my families instead of putting in my heart.” “Now I can say, ‘I love you’ to my parents.” “I kiss them and tell them I love them just like foreign people do.”

Kuwaiti responses to question four were similar. Even more (69.7%) indicated that English had no effect on their family, while 28.5% indicated positive effects, and 1.8% negative ones. Like the Chinese, six people said they helped family members learn English or they studied together, for example: “Sometimes I help my brothers in teaching them.” “English makes us cooperate and learn together (family).” Two people wrote about family obligations: “My father wishes me to learn it.” Finally, one person mentioned what he/she had learned about family life: “We know more about family ties from their [the people who speak English] knowledge.” A positive comment (by two people) that seemed distinctly Kuwaiti was: “I have many relatives that live outside the country, so I speak English with them.”

As Christian teachers, these responses can affirm our desire to prevent our students from absorbing negative family values from western media, while also learning ways to strengthen the family in today’s changing world. We could include in our curriculum content about positive family interaction that is culturally appropriate for our purposes.

5. What is the effect of English on social change in your state or country?

Most Chinese students (87%) were quite positive in response to this question. Although many of the comments seemed vague or perhaps irrelevant (e.g., “More and more Chinese study English”), six were explanatory of these positive responses: “It stimulated the development of economy because more and more visitors come to visit our country.” “English makes China more international and important.” “We can do some business with foreigner.” 11.1% of the responses were neutral and 1.9% were negative. One comment sheds light on the negatives: “Parents are too care about English’s importance so most of their children have been learning English since childhood while neglect some other education.”

There was a relatively wide range of Kuwaiti opinions on this question. 78.5 % were positive and among the comments, people mentioned knowledge, openness, business, communication, getting to know others, and education. 11.4 % of the responses were neutral and 10.1 % were negative. Here are the four cautions that were expressed in the comments: “It can be positive, but many youth are getting away from their mother culture and heading to foreign one.” “Sometimes it has a negative effect, when girls wear [dress] like women in the West, because it doesn't fit with our religion.” “It could be a negative impact in learning the attitudes of the West.” “Because they follow the culture of the countries that speak English without thinking.” Three of these four commenters marked the question with 4 (negative) but one marked it with 2 (positive), highlighting again the need to be cautious in interpreting the numbers.

The comment “without thinking” is perhaps the most important one here, again bringing us back to critical thinking. How can we as Christian English teachers help our students think more deeply about the social changes they adopt or resist?

6. What is the effect of English on conflict and peace between nations in the world?

Both Chinese and Kuwaiti students were varied in their responses to this question. In China 75.9% of respondents indicated positive views, 19.1% were neutral, and 5.0% negative. In Kuwait 54.4% responded in the positive, 37.8% neutral, and 7.8% negative.

Most of the 80 written comments by Chinese students were general comments about communication, understanding, and peace. Similarly, the 24 Kuwaitis who commented wrote statements such as: “It’s a universal language and people need to understand each other to live in peace.” “To understand each other and get the best solution for their conflicts.” “To express

ourselves and make a conversation with others which leads to peace.” One Chinese student wrote about conveying one’s identity to others: “By learning English I can introduce our nation’s culture to the people all over the world. They can understand my country better and better.” One Kuwaiti student wrote about international cooperation in the face of trouble: “Communicating in political problem and disasters.” Another Kuwaiti noted the opposite effect of rapid communication: “It helps us to know more facts, which gets us in problems.”

The views of those whose responses chose a negative option on the survey might be explained by the three Chinese who wrote comments such as, “Many English countries constantly take military action to other countries.” “Some English countries want to get more national market and resources, especially oil, then they just kick off the war.” A similar Kuwaiti comment was: “It’s the cause of wars.” Interestingly, another Kuwaiti comment was: “Many Arabian countries suggested to use Arabic as a first language for all countries, that causes conflicts between the countries and affects peace.”

Conflict between neighbors, ethnic groups, and nations is an unfortunately increasing reality in today’s world. Christian English teachers might be prompted by the varied responses to this question to emphasize in their classes the value of English for promoting peace.

7. What is the effect of English on interpersonal harmony in the world (i.e., how well individuals understand and get along with each other)?

I had intended this question to focus on personal relationships as opposed to nation-to-nation relationships as in question 6. 89.2% of the Chinese respondents were positive about the role of English in people getting along with each other and wrote comments about “communication” and “friendship.” However, some Chinese focused on pragmatic functions in English. Among those who were positive were the writers of comments such as these: “The English manner is polite to us.” “‘Thank you’ and ‘sorry’ are used in our daily life frequently.” “Some words which aren’t proper to speak in Chinese can be expressed in English.” “We always communicate with each other in Chinese. However if I’m very angry I will use English.” 4.1% of the respondents were negative. The following comments might explain their choice: “I think English is so frank that it is offensive sometimes.” “In American films or plays we saw violence often.” Finally, 6.7% of the responses were neutral, exemplified by these comments: “It lies in appreciation of each other [not English].” “Depends on everyone’s personality.” “English is not an almighty language. I don’t think it has this use.”

Kuwaitis were even more positive in answering question 7, with 93.5% of the responses being positive. Some positive comments were general, such as “It’s the common language.” Others were more specific, such as: “It has a great effect. People can convey their ideas and opinions to others.” “To be close to each others in culture/knowledge, then people don’t feel strange to each other.” “As we communicate with foreigners like Filipino or Chinese.” 4.7% of the responses to question 7 were neutral and 1.8% were negative. Two respondents (one of whom was neutral and one of whom was positive) added comments about the need to learn Arabic and not neglect the mother tongue.

Christian English teachers can take these results as a call to both learn about and include in our curricula more content related to intercultural communication. It is true that English is not an “almighty language,” but case studies of people from different nations using English to not only speak to each other but also learn from each other can help Christian teachers encourage uses of English that are more of an influence for harmony.

Discussion and Future Directions

As I have mentioned, and as is usually the case with survey data, there are constraints which mean one must be cautious in generalizing the results. One is the fact that in spite of being piloted, the survey had flaws, such as the question conflating character and morals. It was also open to misinterpretation, regardless of whether the questions were translated or not. Another caution is that all of the respondents were studying English, which suggests they might have had an investment in and therefore some reason to be positive about English, compared to the general population of China or Kuwait as a whole. I am eager to see future research deal with these constraints. A slightly revised questionnaire, interviews in addition to the survey in order to deal with potential misunderstandings, and surveys in additional contexts would be important ways to continue exploring this topic. In particular, Christian English teachers who are interested in learning whether students in their classes are experiencing any change in their spiritual or religious development might expand question 3 in the survey.

In addition, even though I started this study simply thinking of English as a force for good or ill, it might be useful to carry out future research with a stronger conceptual framework. Let me briefly introduce several that may prove relevant and useful.

One such framework would include a focus beyond English itself with a clearer picture of the learners and the communities in which they live. Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System is a good framework for this purpose. This model consists of the "ideal L2 self," or the person speaking the target language that we want to become; the "ought-to L2 self," or the way we meet others' expectations and avoid negative outcomes; and the "L2 learning experience," which concerns the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, and peers, as well as the whether we experience success in learning. Practically speaking, Dörnyei (2009) says that learners need to create and maintain a vision of their ideal L2 self. Some of the subjects' comments in the present study, particularly in response to question 1, reveal that they have a vision of a new English-speaking self which is confident or sociable, for example.

Critical pedagogy may also provide a useful framework for examining how language teaching might effect change. The chapter "Teachers for Social Responsibility" in Brown (2007) is an accessible summary of this field. Peace linguistics may be another framework relevant to some of the questions in this survey. Is English a language which displaces other languages, promotes communicative inequality, and results in linguistic and cultural homogenization? Or is English, as an international lingua franca, especially when used responsibly, capable of being a tool for peace? This debate is nicely summarized by Bolton (2005) and Friedrich (2007a).

One who has written passionately and practically about Peace Linguistics is the Brazilian Gomes de Matos. For example, he has a set of 12 pairings to encourage more peaceful communication, e.g., "Don't denigrate, appreciate," and an alphabet of suggestions that starts with Aim at Affect and Amiability and Build Bridges of Blessings, and goes on to Veto Violent Vocabulary, and Weigh your Words with Wisdom (Gomes de Matos, 2008). He states the importance of learning how to read political texts and engage in constructive political discourse for the sake of healthy democratic societies (Gomes de Matos, 2000). Snow's (2001) classic *English Teaching as Christian Mission* has a chapter on English teachers as peacemakers, which can also guide Christians hoping to explore this more.

Several of the survey responses brought up the importance of critical thinking, in particular, identifying elements that may somehow become attached to the English language which one does not want to embrace. Atkinson (1997) and Davidson (1998) provide a starting point for teachers who want to pursue this direction.

Finally, I think that the literature on change and transformation from other fields, such as anthropology, business, missiology, and psychology, could be exploited to provide relevant frameworks. As we research whether the study and use of English is bringing about positive or negative change (or no change at all), insights from fields beyond TESOL may be helpful.

Potential Implications for Teachers

Despite the need to be cautious in making generalizations from this study, I believe there were enough positive results to reasonably claim that English is likely to be a force for good rather than bad, especially in the hands of good teachers. At the same time, even a few people noting that English has a negative effect on any of the categories should be a concern. So then, how can teachers use this data to counter negative effects and foster positive effects from English? It seems to me that awareness is a first step. Knowing the negative issues that might arise from the study of English can alert teachers to course content that might need to be problematized for their learners. Teachers might want to use the survey (in the Appendix) with their students to start them also thinking about these issues.

As I summarized responses to each question, I noted some specific ideas for materials and class content. Let me reiterate them here. Teachers can choose materials which give students positive role models to emulate and stories to be inspired by. Content can include appropriate attitudes toward wealth, ways to strengthen families, and techniques for effective interpersonal and intercultural communication. Teachers can help students navigate what they read, hear, and click on to identify and choose what is good, and discard what is bad. Teachers can give their students a vision for using both English and their other languages for good in their community and for peace in the world. This means that we need a principled approach to teaching assessment, curriculum design, materials selection, and materials writing which takes into account such goals. As Smith and Carvill (2000) point out, typical textbooks teach students the language of buying, but not charitable giving, complaining but not necessarily praising, and apologizing, but usually not forgiving. The people students read about in English often exemplify freedom, play, and love – not responsibility or sacrifice.

One such framework for materials and teaching assessment is based on Stassen and Gushee (2003) and outlined in Purgason (2011). Stassen and Gushee's (2003) *Kingdom Ethics* describes the marks of God's reign (such as justice, healing, peace, and community), the virtues

characterizing the people of God's kingdom (such as gentleness, forgiveness, patience, endurance, and self-control), areas of the world most in need of ethical solutions (a few examples are war, human rights, the value of life, and the right use of money), and dimensions of character needed to bring about God's reign (including how we reason, our worldview, and our loyalties). English language classes that feature these qualities, promote these virtues, discuss these needs, or develop these characteristics might be said to be bringing about God's kingdom and making English a force for good.

Conclusion

As the results of this survey suggest, Christians can no longer blithely go into their communities or around the world teaching English as though in and of itself it is a good thing. Instead, we need to recognize English's potential for both good and ill, in both individual students and societies. This will help our work contribute to Jesus' message and mission and give our students reasons to be positive about all the aspects of their lives covered in the survey.

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Appendix: The Survey Instrument

This survey is about the effects of English. “English” is used in a broad sense to include “studying and learning English,” “using English,” and “the English language.”

Age: _____ Male or female: _____ Current city: _____

Circle (or highlight) the number above the phrase that matches your personal **opinion** and **experience**.

1. What is the effect of English on your personal character and morals?

1	2	3	4	5
strengthening them a lot	strengthening them a little	no effect	weakening them a little	weakening them a lot

Comment: _____

2. What is the effect of English on your material well-being (rich or poor)?

1	2	3	4	5
making it more likely to be rich	making it somewhat likely to be rich	no effect	making it likely to be poor	making it more likely to be poor

Comment: _____

3. What is the effect of English on your spiritual or religious development?

1	2	3	4	5
making me a lot more spiritual	making me a little more spiritual	no effect	making me a little less spiritual	making me a lot less spiritual

Comment: _____

4. What is the effect of English on your family ties (that is, how close you are to family members)?

1	2	3	4	5
strengthening our ties a lot	strengthening our ties a little	no effect	weakening our ties a little	weakening our ties a lot

Comment: _____

5. What is the effect of English on social change in your state or country?

1	2	3	4	5
bringing a lot of positive change	bringing some positive change	no effect	bringing some negative change	bringing a lot of negative change

Comment: _____

6. What is the effect of English on conflict and peace between nations in the world?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|--|--|
| 1
making peace
much more likely | 2
making peace
a little more likely | 3
no effect | 4
making conflict
a little more likely | 5
making conflict
much more likely |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|--|--|

Comment: _____

7. What is the effect of English on interpersonal harmony in the world, that is, how well individuals understand and get along with each other?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1
leading to much
more harmony | 2
leading to a little
more harmony | 3
no effect | 4
leading to a little
more tension | 5
leading to much
more tension |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|

Comment: _____

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Addressing Reconciliation in the ESL Classroom

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Abstract

The extent to which teachers' spiritual identities should inform their pedagogy has been a topic of much discussion among TESOL professionals. Under particular scrutiny have been Christian English teachers (CET), whose faith can be disconcerting to a multicultural field that strongly values diversity. Meanwhile, another conversation continues regarding ways in which language teaching can be used as a means of promoting social justice and global citizenship. This article attempts to add to these conversations by proposing that reconciliation should be addressed in the classroom and by suggesting that it is a topic of interest to both CET and others who are not adherents of the Christian faith. It also discusses possibilities for how teachers could broach this subject in the classroom. Finally, it challenges CET and their critics to consider ways in which a recognition of such areas of shared interest may stimulate greater collaboration between educators who hold to seemingly disparate philosophical positions.

Key words: conflict, critical pedagogy, curriculum, ESL, pedagogy, reconciliation

Introduction

A passionate debate has been taking place within the TESOL profession among Christian English teachers (CET) and Critical Practitioners (CP), arguing the extent to which religion, faith, and spirituality should impact the language classroom (Edge, 2003, 2004; Griffith, 2004; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003; Purgason, 2004; Wong & Canagarajah, 2009). Meanwhile, a different, yet sometimes overlapping conversation has been taking place discussing the use of language teaching as a means of promoting peace and social justice (Morgan & Vandrick, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2007). However, one area that is in need of further attention is how areas of agreed upon and universal worth could be addressed in the classroom. This article will argue that the topic of reconciliation carries significance and collaborative opportunities for both CP and CET and discuss ways in which this topic could be addressed in the classroom.

Education is increasingly being viewed as a transformational process. Rather than focusing on the mere absorption of content, many teachers endeavor to change students' "learning-related attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills" (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 576). Additionally, there is great interest in locating and utilizing learning materials that are relevant

to the lives of learners because of the belief that they enhance learning (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Floyd & Hebert, 2010; Titone, Plummer, & Kielar, 2012). Both secular and religiously inspired educators have sought ways of increasing the number of meaningful and transformational curricular materials available in the classroom (Morgan & Vandrick, 2009; Purgason, 2009; Smith, 2008). This notion of educators seeking change and growth in their students is widely accepted, although there is some disagreement as to what types of change should be encouraged and how such change should be accomplished (Ferris, 2009; Morgan, 2009; Purgason, 2009). The use of power and position to impose one's viewpoints on students receives justified condemnation (Byler, 2009; Vandrick, 2009), but educators are encouraged to promote critical thinking and maintain a classroom that can serve as "a model of the world as a context for tolerance and for the appreciation of diversity" (Brown, 2009, p. 267). Helping students think critically and respect others is a commendable goal for the language classroom; however, in the midst of growing in these areas, students are likely to experience conflict and should be equipped to respond appropriately.

Reconciliation in the Classroom

The creation of a safe and supportive learning environment is an important goal for educators. Laudable efforts have been made to equip teachers in promoting greater understanding and acceptance of different races, religions, and worldviews (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2011). The question remains, however, of how to proceed when offenses do occur. Particularly in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom, it is highly unrealistic to expect perfect peace and harmony among diverse peoples bringing unique perspectives, especially considering misunderstandings that can occur simply as a result of unfamiliarity with the target language. Offenses are inevitable. When such wrongs occur in the classroom, what is the appropriate response? Change the subject? End the discussion? Punish the offender? Sweeping such issues under the proverbial rug does not foster a safe learning environment, nor will it encourage the greater efforts at peace and understanding that all teachers, regardless of religious persuasion, should desire.

In describing an account of one student intentionally insulting another in his classroom, Smith (2007) writes that through his response he "would have been implicitly advocating through [his] actions some particular stance on the ethics of interpersonal interaction as well as

on the relative situational merits of punishment and forgiveness, retribution and reconciliation” (p. 35). Smith (2007) chose to address the offending student outside of the classroom, explaining that he would have been less upset if the student had broken something physical in the classroom, and describing how feelings are more fragile and of greater worth. After fighting through tears of his own, the offending student returned to class and apologized. While Smith’s (2007) response could be critiqued and would be more appropriate in some contexts than others, it illustrates the importance of cultivating a classroom environment where reconciliation is encouraged.

It is not only students who harm one another. Despite their best intentions, teachers will occasionally offend students, and students will inadvertently offend teachers. The inevitability of offense is significant because, as Johnston (1999) writes, a foundational aspect of education is “the moral relation between teacher and students” (p. 561). Gebhard and Oprandy (2003) discuss the need for teachers to be genuine in the classroom and how genuineness can lead to trust, describing the “quality of trustworthiness that comes from being less judgmental, by not having to control another person, by not having to be infallible, by being sincere and spontaneous, and by truly engaging oneself with others” (p. 141). Such authenticity can certainly help to establish a fruitful classroom environment. However, in such a classroom a teacher’s imperfections are likely to be revealed, causing inadvertent offense. Equipping students with the language skills necessary to address these offenses with an effort towards reconciliation can provide students with a powerful cultural and linguistic tool while simultaneously helping to balance classroom power dynamics. In this way, the teaching of reconciliation could be viewed as an element of critical pedagogy. Because of the inevitability of conflict in the classroom, equipping students to perform such tasks as respectfully disputing a perceived unfair grade or confronting a teacher who caused offense through an off-handed comment could prove invaluable in regards to creating a safe classroom environment.

Importance for both CET and CP

For Christians, the idea of reconciliation can hardly be overstated. When stripped to its essence, the message of Christianity is about broken relationships being reconciled through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Byler (2009) writes that:

At the heart of the gospel is a vision of reconciliation, a mending and healing of that which has been torn apart. This reconciliation is not only between God and humans, but

it is also concerned with bringing peace between enemies, between groups or of persons and entire cultures. (p. 129)

The Christian understanding of reconciliation is unique since its inspiration for reconciliation with others is a restored relationship with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This restoration is both the model and impetus for Christian efforts at reconciliation. Those who do not hold a Christian worldview approach reconciliation efforts from other perspectives; however, that does not mean that the hope of restored relationships appeals to only Christians. Efforts at encouraging reconciliation have been undertaken by adherents of other faiths as well as by those outside of any religious faith (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008; Androff, 2012).

The idea of collaborating with those who do not subscribe to the Christian faith might produce a sense of unease in some. Questions arise about whether there is value in such collaboration and if attempts at finding common ground will lead to a kind of syncretism, where the uniqueness of Christianity is lost. Dula and Epp Weaver (2007) address this concern by suggesting that truths can be found in other worldviews, but “they cannot be allowed to crowd Christ out, to compete with him or to replace him. All they can do is witness to him” (p. 164). In other words, seeking additional input from those who are not Christians does not replace an individual’s faith in Christ, but enhances it. Interacting with those of different faiths challenges Christians to continuously reexamine their beliefs. Such interactions can increase the vitality of one’s faith, leading to “a deeper engagement with scripture” (Dula & Epp Weaver, 2007, p. 166). In this way interacting with the “other” can lead to more thoughtful exegesis. This does not mean that such experiences are always pleasant. Lamb (1984) describes how meeting with those of a different faith “is an exceptionally disturbing event in the lives of many Christians” (p. 156). Such interactions shake one’s assumptions and bring forth challenging questions that test one’s faith. In spite of this discomfort, Lamb does not suggest that we avoid such exchanges, but that “the church must take its critics for its friends, and listen to what God is saying through them” (p. 158). Additionally, through humbly accepting their own faults and striving for restored relationships, Christians provide a living model of what life in Christ should entail. In this way, reconciliation can serve as what D’Souza and D’Souza (1996) describe as “a new mission paradigm” (p. 211).

Putting it into Practice

The first step in equipping learners to respond to conflict is through teaching the language of reconciliation. This is an area of importance for all learners, regardless of their current linguistic ability. For beginning students, we must move beyond “please” and “thank you” and teach students terminology that equips them to deal with inevitable conflict, such as “That hurt my feelings,” “I’m sorry,” “I made a mistake,” “Will you forgive me?” and “I forgive you.” Purgason (2009) critiques the singular dimension of many textbooks, saying that they “teach students the language of buying, but not charitable giving, complaining but not necessarily praising, and *apologizing, but usually not forgiving*” (p. 190, italics mine).

Teaching vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, from the viewpoint of restored relationships has the potential to be intrinsically motivating and beneficial for learners. When students are equipped with the linguistic and cultural tools to respond to offense, they will be better able to discuss important, yet touchy, topics one would expect to find in a communicative classroom. Students who experience post-conflict resolution in their own lives may come away from such experiences with a greater sense of hope and possibility in regards to larger scale reconciliation efforts. As such, teaching about reconciliation is a grass-roots way of encouraging positive world change.

Using Role-Play

The use of acting or role-play is a frequent tool for encouraging creative language practice. While role-play activities may involve basic interactions such as shopping or going to the dentist, Shapiro and Leopold (2012) describe the specific benefits of what they refer to as “critical role-play”:

Critical role-play requires students to embody voices and perspectives that may be quite different from their own. It asks them to speak and write using discourse that may be unfamiliar. It encourages them to explore relationships among people, texts, and contexts. Critical role-play, therefore, is both cognitively and linguistically challenging. (p. 123)

Additionally, Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) discuss the use of role-play as a means of increasing empathy and building cross-cultural understanding. The use of such role-play has the potential to develop empathy that can serve as a foundation for lessons focusing on reconciliation. In addition, providing opportunities for students to “practice” dealing with

conflict and addressing fractured relationships may reduce their anxiety about committing unintentional cultural *faux pas*, providing them with greater confidence. While ESL students may already be quite adept at dealing with conflict in their own cultures, it is still important to equip them to do so while interacting with members of other cultures. The linguistic skill of reconciling is significant and demonstrates that while mistakes are likely to occur, they need not be relationally devastating.

Reconciliation Among Professionals

Moving beyond the student/teacher interactions, it is important to recognize that conflict occurs within institutional contexts. TESOL brings together passionate people with deeply ingrained and sometimes conflicting values. The recent and ongoing debate among educators regarding the extent to which an educator's religious beliefs should influence his or her pedagogy is but one example. Within this impassioned debate there have been encouraging voices calling for greater dialogue and understanding. Johnston (2009) calls for those on each side of the debate to not give up on dialogue about areas of difference and to "admit that the other side may sometimes be right" (p. 43). Edge (2009) provides models of discourse that allow persons of diverse viewpoints to engage one another respectfully and with a genuine aim of understanding. Critical practitioners Varghese and Johnston (2007) avoid stereotyping by taking the time to interview Christians who will be future teachers of English in order to gain a more accurate picture of the ways in which their faiths intersected with their motivations and goals in teaching and their pedagogical practices. These attempts at understanding were the inspiration for this article.

While these interactions have been encouraging, the lack of collaboration evidences a continued rift between CP and CET. A significant divide continues to exist, particularly in the realm of curricular development. Dialogue is helpful, but it is not a substitute for reconciliation. It is one thing to discuss issues while remaining apart. It is quite another to work together for a shared purpose. Collaboration requires contact. It is through continued interaction with the "other" that we begin to recognize similarities over differences. It does not require complete agreement in all areas, but it does involve seeing individuals as more than the ideas or worldviews that they represent. Levine and Bishai (2010) write about teaching citizenship in the classroom in areas of the world that have experienced significant discord. One method they

suggest for such teaching is the use of collaborative projects. They write that “One point of classroom group work is that building citizenship in the wake of conflict requires students to confront each other across problematic social divides inflamed by histories of violence” (p. 4). They continue by suggesting that having learners work together on tasks that will be graded may help to maximize the impact of such collaborative efforts. Perhaps more immediately applicable would be Geltner and Ditzhazy’s (1994) description of educators striving for collaboration in the midst of institutional change. They describe a group of educators at a midwestern university who, in the midst of a collaborative transformation of a university program, “transformed themselves and their relationships” (p. 2). In describing part of the process and its effects, they write that the experience:

served as an opportunity for faculty to have extended conversations, to share expertise, to better understand others’ perspectives, and to create a culture in which new ideas were introduced, considered and included as part of a new comprehensive whole. (Geltner & Ditzhazy, 1994, p. 12)

In the midst of disputes within the TESOL profession, sincere collaborative efforts would demonstrate an authentic desire for mutual understanding that goes beyond theoretical respect from a distance. While the conversation about the influence of faith on pedagogy should continue, one aim of this article is to suggest that, even within the debate, areas of mutual interest exist between disparate positions. Perhaps considering these areas will encourage future efforts at collaboration and gradually create a greater sense of reconciliation within the TESOL profession.

Conclusion

Conflict is an inevitable part of life, but it need not lead to permanently severed relationships. The pervasive biblical theme of reconciliation makes it of special importance for CET who hope to emulate Christ personally and professionally. Dealing with conflict is a highly relevant topic for English language learners studying outside of their own cultural contexts, and one that can be readily addressed in the classroom. Teachers hoping to address this topic might consider having students work in culturally mixed groups to compare and contrast beliefs about conflict (e.g., What causes conflict? How do people apologize? Is forgiveness important?). This could be followed by a role-play in which students demonstrate what type of interaction would be necessary for both parties to feel that reconciliation had

occurred. In addition, teachers could provide written scenarios involving conflicts between two parties (see the Appendix for one example). Students could describe the situation, determine the cause of conflict, and brainstorm possible solutions. This activity could conclude with students writing a dialogue leading to reconciliation and performing it in a role play for the class. Finally, teachers could challenge students to imagine some type of classroom offense (e.g., the teacher said something culturally inappropriate or gave a seemingly unfair grade) and write a letter to their instructor explaining their feelings. What would be appropriate is highly context dependent, but as I have argued reconciliation has great potential as a stimulating, enriching, and empowering topic for the ESL classroom.

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Appendix: An Example for Working Toward Reconciliation in the Classroom

Scenario

Mustafa is a very ambitious student. He studies very hard and asks a lot of questions in class. Often, his teacher says that he does not know the answer and that Mustafa should look up the information himself. The last time he said that, the class laughed and Mustafa felt embarrassed. He feels angry towards his teacher because the teacher does not seem to take his questions seriously and even seemed to make fun of him. Mustafa pays a lot of money to attend this language school and feels like he should be treated with more respect.

Task 1

Turn this paper over and explain the above situation in your own words. Then re-read the scenario. Discuss the following questions with your small group.

1. What is causing the conflict?
2. What emotions is Mustafa feeling?
3. Do you think the teacher is being disrespectful?
4. What emotions do you think the teacher is feeling?
5. Why do you think the teacher keeps telling Mustafa to look up the information himself?
6. Does the teacher know how Mustafa feels?
7. What should happen next?
8. What will happen if Mustafa talks to his teacher about this problem?
9. What will happen if Mustafa stays silent?

Task 2

It is normal for people to have arguments or to hurt one another’s feelings. It is normal to get angry. Reconciliation is the idea of a restored relationship. People can reconcile when they express their hurt feelings, solve problems, and forgive one another.

Imagine a situation where Mustafa decides to talk to his teacher about the frustration and embarrassment he feels. Create a one-page dialogue that allows both participants to express their feelings. Make sure that the dialogue leads to reconciliation, where both Mustafa and his teacher feel that their issues have been resolved.

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Reviews

Christian faith and English language teaching and learning: Research on the interrelationship of religion and ELT

Mary Shepard Wong, Carolyn Kristjánsson, and Zoltán Dörnyei (Eds.). New York: Routledge, 2013. Pp. xiii + 279, \$135.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9780415898959.

Reviewed by Jan Edwards Dormer, Messiah College

Those concerned with issues at the intersection of Christianity and English language teaching have seen great strides in this emerging field in recent years. Ten years ago, articles began appearing on this theme – some calling Christians to task for engaging in missionary work while teaching English (e.g., Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003), and others in response to such accusations (e.g., Baurain, 2007). Then Wong and Canagarajah's (2009) landmark book brought diverse opinions on the subject together in one volume. Now the present collection edited by Wong, Kristjánsson, and Dörnyei addresses the need for empirical research in this emergent field. Canagarajah states in the foreword that this text “ushers in a tradition of research on faith-based teaching that future generations of teachers and researchers can build upon” (p. xxiii).

Summary

After helpful front pages introducing the contributors and providing a guide to acronyms used, the book opens with a preface outlining the format, purpose and intended audience. This is followed by a foreword by Suresh Canagarajah, who unapologetically addresses the limitations experienced by secular researchers and theorists in attempting to understand faith-based language teaching, and the necessity of hearing the voices of Christian researchers. Chapter 1, written by the three editors, begins with a history of research and writing on faith and ELT over the past two decades, followed by the rationale for this volume: that previous writing on faith and ELT has largely been theoretical or ideological in nature, and empirical research is needed. The editors then outline the three main sections in the book on 1) Christian faith and language teacher identity, 2) Christian faith and the English language learning context, and 3) Christian faith, motivation, and L2 learning process. Each section contains several research studies, concluding with a review by a well-known scholar and discussion questions. A final section wraps up the volume in part 4), resources and conclusions.

Part one begins with chapter 2, “Called to teach: The impact of faith on professional identity formation of three Western English teachers in China.” Author Mary Shepard Wong presents a longitudinal study of three teachers and their identity formation over the course of a decade, confirming the impact of personal identity and purpose on teacher identity. In chapter 3, “The role of faith in the power balance between Christian native speakers and Taiwanese teachers who team teach,” Shu-Chuan Wang-McGrath provides four interactional models, which helpfully describe different ways in which native and nonnative English speaking teachers (NESTs and NNESTs) might interact. She looks specifically at issues of power, asserting that there was “no evidence in this study that the power balance was manipulated with the intent of winning students over to thinking positively about Christianity. Rather, native speaker status was used as a tool to help fellow teachers help their students learn English well” (p. 45). In chapter 4, “Folk linguistics, content-oriented discourse analysis, and language teacher beliefs,” Michael Pasquale investigates the relationship between faith and practice in veteran and pre-service teachers. His findings reveal that “whereas veteran teachers understand their faith and practice to be inseparably intertwined, the accounts of pre-service teachers indicate a less integrated understanding” (p. 47). The final study in part one is chapter 5, “‘Forever changed’: Emerging TESOL educators’ cultural learning and spiritual formation on a study abroad trip in Myanmar,” by Shuang Frances Wu and Mary Shepard Wong. Conducted through a summer study abroad trip primarily composed of graduate students in TESOL, this research confirms that study abroad programs can result in spiritual growth as well as increased understanding of world languages and cultures. The review for part one, chapter 6, is provided by Magdalena Kubanyiova, and is entitled “Towards understanding the role of faith in the development of language teachers’ identities: A modest proposal for extending the research agenda.” This chapter is one of the gems in this volume, tying together the research presented with simple yet impactful statements such as “Christian beliefs may be a key source for constructing teachers’ images of good teaching” (p. 87). Kubanyiova also succeeds well in her goal of extending the research agenda, with a call for more empirical research on “enacted” as opposed to merely “narrated” identities, involving the thick description that enhances the validity of qualitative research (p. 90).

Part two begins with chapter 7, “The globalization of English and China’s Christian colleges,” by Don Snow. With a fascinating documentation of the history of the University of

Nanking with regard to language issues, and reference to other colleges and universities along the way, this chapter is a must-read for any Christian working in the Chinese context. Snow calls into question the accuracy of Pennycook and Makoni's (2005) characterization of English use in Christian colleges as "'attacking and destroying' other languages and cultures" (p. 106), pointing out that "among Chinese parents and students, there was substantial demand for English-medium education" and "the demand from Chinese people was sometimes greater than the willingness of missionaries to offer education in English" (p. 107). Snow reaffirms his strong claims elsewhere (e.g., Snow, 2009) that valuing the local language is an imperative in ELT contexts, and that ultimately, "the goal is generally to strike a balance, meeting students' needs by assisting them in acquisition of a language that empowers them, but also honoring and encouraging their languages and cultures" (p. 112). In chapter 8, "Faith and learning integration in ESL/EFL instruction: A preliminary study in America and Indonesia," Michael Lessard-Clouston presents research on teachers' perceptions and experiences of integration in two very different ELT contexts, in order to "provide baseline data on faith integration in ESL/EFL" (p. 133). Interestingly, he found that "ESL/EFL syllabi for courses in both contexts reportedly neglect any mention of faith and learning integration, though it is valued at both institutions" (p. 131) and that "participants indicated a clear desire to obtain more training in integrating their faith and their teaching better" (p. 132).

In chapter 9, "Putting beliefs into practice in a church-run adult ESOL ministry," Bradley Baurain describes a qualitative study primarily involving six volunteer tutors in an ESL program run by an evangelical church in the U.S. Similar in focus to Lessard-Clouston's study, Baurain sought to understand "the applied dynamics of how religious beliefs might be translated into words, actions, and patterns of behavior" (p. 136). He identifies four emergent themes: 1) relationality and empathy, 2) Christian love and care, 3) practical service, and 4) learner-centeredness, and addresses the fact that "the connections the volunteers made between their ESOL tutoring and their Christian religious beliefs are connections that can also be made by people who believe differently" (p. 148), questioning the nature of *Christian* witness. Lessard-Clouston's and Baurain's research combined should lead those responsible for Christian ESL/EFL programs to deeper consideration of missional or faith-based goals, and how these goals are articulated and met. David Smith's commentary concludes this section in chapter 10, "Frameworks for investigating faith and ESL: A response to Snow, Lessard-

Clouston, and Baurain.” Smith points to the complexity inherent in investigating faith in practice, stating that “each frame makes certain aspects of the whole visible, while perhaps obscuring others,” and calling for “coordinated attention to beliefs, practices, institutional dynamics, cultural and communal contexts and divergent interpretations of both faith and practice within the Christian fold” (p. 163).

Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler and Zoltán Dörnyei begin part three with chapter 11, “The role of sacred texts in enhancing motivation and living the vision in second language acquisition.” They found that a sacred text (the Bible, specifically, for their participants) contributed to learner motivation in “(1) *creating the vision* (*why* participants learn language); and (2) *living the vision* (*how hard* and *how long* they are willing to work at it)” (p. 176). In summary, the authors state that “when the three key components examined in this study – divine call/vision, L2 learning vision, and a sacred text – are pooled, synchronized, and channeled meaningfully, they appear to generate an unusually high ‘jet stream’ of motivation for language learning” (p. 186). In chapter 12, “Cosmopolitanism, Christianity, and the contemporary Chinese context: Impacts upon second language motivation,” Peng Ding reports on a study of primarily Chinese university students, with regard to the connection between English learning and the Christian faith. Ding discovered an “intertwined” relationship between Christianity and English learning – that is, the students’ Christian faith contributed to their English language learning and English learning directed them towards the Christian faith. Ding summarizes:

It is this transformative effect of their faith that led to a radical shift in their motivational dispositions with regard to learning English, considerably reducing the fear of failure and the fear of the subject, and enhancing both the students’ confidence in their own abilities to learn English and their attitudes and approaches toward the learning of English. (p. 203)

Letty Chan provides the final research study in chapter 13, “Christian language professionals (CLPS) and integrated vision: The stories of four educators.” Her research explores the integration of Christian and professional selves, and how such integration develops, helping us understand that “even committed Christians do not share the same pattern of Ideal Self integration” (p. 221). In chapter 14, Ema Ushioda writes the review for this section, “Christian faith, motivation, and L2 learning: Personal, social, and research perspectives.” In addressing the motivational self-system upon which several of the studies were framed, Ushioda poses a question that is especially interesting in light of the fact that she is the book’s

only self-proclaimed non-Christian author: “Conceptually speaking, one may well ask whether such motivation can be viewed as ‘self-determined’ if the L2 learner believes it to emanate from a higher divine source, and whether we need to theorize new forms of L2 motivation to capture this belief in divine (rather than self or external) regulation of motivation” (p. 225). Ushioda also urges us to consider the fact that Christian communities are essentially social communities, and that perhaps the social nature, rather than or in addition to the Christian nature, of these communities is a driving force in L2 motivation.

Part four begins with chapter 15, “A working bibliography: Faith and language teaching,” by Tasha Bleistein, Mary Shepard Wong and David Smith, no doubt the largest collection of resources on this topic to date, and invaluable in furthering research on faith and ELT. In Chapter 16, “Conclusion: Faith and SLA: An emerging area of inquiry,” the editors restate the rationale for the book: “to go beyond ideological and belief-based claims concerning the interaction of religion and language and to generate firm insights into the actual role that faith plays in various aspects of the language learning and teaching experience” (p. 267). They then proceed to address various issues brought to light in the volume’s research, clearing a path for future research on such topics as student perspectives, spiritual agency, cognitive and social agendas in SLA, the linking of faith beliefs to methodology, and similar investigations with other faiths. The editors conclude by reiterating that “the domain of ‘faith and SLA’ is a valid research strand” (p. 271).

Commentary

I couldn’t agree more. Certainly, this collection of robust research furthers the view of faith and ELT as a legitimate and important area of inquiry. Given how difficult it is to conduct and publish quality research studies, this book is a laudable contribution to the literature, and the studies here may serve as examples for other Christians wishing to carry out their own qualitative research on related aspects of religion and ELT. However, any collection of research shows us not only what we know, but also what is still lacking. It is these issues which I will now address.

First, I felt in reading some of the studies in this collection that earlier Christian work in ELT was either unknown or unacknowledged. For example, Dörnyei and Lepp-Kaethler suggest “We might consider using sacred texts...as L2 curriculum content” (p. 185), and “The results of this study point to a hidden but surprisingly powerful motivator for SLA that has

received little attention in the field of applied linguistics” (p. 186). These comments fail to acknowledge that the Bible *has* been used as L2 curriculum in missions for many decades. While it is no doubt true that the use of sacred texts has received little attention in the academy, the role of the Bible in English study is neither surprising nor unaddressed, and the greater wisdom often needed is caution in using it appropriately (Dormer, 2011). Another example where a connection to previous work in missions would have added richness to the current research is in Wang-McGrath’s chapter. NEST/NNEST topics have begun receiving attention in mission circles (e.g., Wong & Stratton, 2011), and NEST/NNEST interaction specifically has been addressed (e.g., Dormer, 2007). I hope that as Christians in the academy continue to provide us with valuable research, the voices of *all* Christians engaged in English teaching and learning will be sought, valued and incorporated into our ongoing, collective learning.

Second, the editors explain in chapter one that “The richest data were obtained about teacher identities” (p. 5), and reiterate this fact in the conclusion, acknowledging that “future research could potentially be enhanced by also including student voices in the research designs” (p. 268). I would state this more strongly: I believe we *must* extend our research in this direction. In fact perhaps this collection warrants a follow up volume with research specifically on Christian faith and the *learning* of English. Finally, I hope that future investigation will dare to push beyond the often sterile and purely analytic boundaries that often limit our research. In *Scholarship and Christian Faith*, Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2004) challenge Christian scholars to value *strategic* and *empathic* scholarship alongside the more traditional *analytic* scholarship. Perhaps our field is ripe for empathic scholarship, “seeking to think with the subject rather than merely about the subject of inquiry” (p. 127). Could it be that limiting ourselves to the familiar analytic approach common in empirical studies is partly to blame for our lack of research involving learners? Might we, as Christians, have a unique role to play in bringing more relational and personal forms of research to larger acceptance within our field of TESOL?

These suggestions ultimately speak in favor of the success of this text. The editors have motivated this reader to consider ways to further bridge the gap between lay/church/mission knowledge and the academy of TESOL professionals. And the wheels have begun turning on a possible a study of learner voices that is more empathic in nature. In short, the writers and editors of this volume have indeed set the stage for future research.

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Every Tribe and Tongue: A Biblical Vision for Language and Society

Michael Pasquale and Nathan L. K. Bierma. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011. Pp. xi + 84, \$14.00 (paper), ISBN 9781608990146.

Reviewed by William Acton, Trinity Western University

What should the Christian English language instructor's perspective be on multilingualism, multiculturalism or English-only advocacy? I am asked those questions repeatedly in any of several forms. *Every Tribe and Tongue: A Biblical Vision for Language and Society*, by Michael Pasquale and Nathan L. K. Bierma, provides a workable framework for a response. Fortunately, the book is written to be accessible to undergraduate students; it is eminently readable, Scripturally sound and grounded, such that it will be very helpful in any number of contexts. And one other bit of "meta-commentary" on the basic format: I found it to

be an engaging read on two levels. First, it provides the essential Biblical anchoring, along with linguistic, historical and sociological arguments for the central thesis of the book:

A community transformed through Christ will be marked in part by its transformed vision for language as a gift from God, and will see itself as called out from the world to model a new way of appreciating and using language in society that anticipates the heavenly gathering of every tribe and tongue. (p. 80)

Second, perhaps the most striking aspect of the book for any involved in Christian English language teacher training is the well-marked path of the argument adopted by Pasquale and Bierma. Their point of departure is basically the nature of language as God-created and how that has unfolded throughout history. By beginning there – rather than with the current sociocultural or sociolinguistic or sociopolitical arguments – language and its place in culture, society, the identity of the individual and the Christian worldview remain in proper perspective.

Having finished reading the book, it is not all that difficult to verbalize the outline of your answer to the questions posed above. It is one of those almost catechism-like, ordered set of 8 chapters that both inform the reader new to the issues and assist anyone in presenting the case and evidence, or training students how to do the same. (The general focus is on the U.S., but the overall framework is relevant and easily adaptable in many cultures and contexts.) Just articulating the opening “way in” of our understanding of the central role of language and its creator will make immediate sense to most any believer, and will situate the discussion within our worldview from the outset, rather than struggling to return to it later in the discussion.

In part due to the breadth and scope of the presentation in 80 pages, it is not possible to cover all areas equally or adequately in places for some readers. One may have to at least temporarily take a few of the arguments on faith – and investigate further if necessary. (As the book is intended for upper division students, we can assume the general reader is coming to the narrative with some background, at least in the Christian faith tradition, of linguistics and some basic theology.) The sections dealing with second language identity and child language acquisition do identify the key pieces but are relatively dense for the uninformed or unconvinced reader. The sections dealing with the history of immigration in the U.S., on the other hand, are especially well written and informative.

From a professional-political standpoint, as Christian leaders in this field, there is no more important voice for the public square or response to be thoughtfully prepared for today than that addressed well in *Every Tribe and Tongue*. Required reading.

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Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity

Jan Edwards Dormer. Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 2011.

Pp. xvii + 165, \$13.99 (paper), ISBN 9780878085262.

Reviewed by Marilyn Lewis, University of Auckland

The last few years have seen a sprinkling of books and articles on the topic of *Teaching English in Mission*. Dormer's background of academic qualifications, her professional work in four continents and her starting point as a person of faith qualify her to add ideas to the discussion. Her bringing together of two aspects makes this book's genre difficult to pigeonhole. As well as addressing the big issues of the relationship between professional and faith-based callings, the author offers plenty of practical advice to people who want to combine these two. Her strong case for integrity might dissuade some from taking up what they thought would be a good opportunity for service, but for those who persist, there are plenty of suggestions for being professionally effective. These two threads are interwoven through the text.

The title of the first (short) chapter is the clue to Dormer's first premise: "If you can speak English you can teach it. True or false?" In other words, do qualifications matter in teaching a language if one is already a native speaker? People who see the answer as obvious might find the statistics and examples from mission organisations sobering. To make her point, Dormer supports anecdotal snippets about the hypothetical and well-intentioned "Bill," with an evaluation of his readiness to be an English language teaching professional. Based on her figure "Requirements for effective language teaching," poor Bill scored only 37%.

Warming to her theme, in Chapter 2 Dormer borrows a medical analogy for the title: "First, do no harm: An English teacher's Hippocratic oath". Here she presents both the good that can be done by the well prepared English teacher and the harms that stem from the well-meaning efforts of others. She is not afraid to agree with critics of those embarking on teaching English for non-transparent reasons and without qualifications. She summarises their warnings about societal, cultural and educational harm, followed by a category of her own: spiritual harm. In the introduction, two possible reader groups were suggested: pre-service teachers of English

and those already trained. In the light of the material in the first two chapters, to these I would add as readers the organisations who send well intentioned but professionally unqualified people overseas.

By Chapter 3, “English ministries with integrity: Four types,” the message becomes more positive, despite opening comments about what English ministry is not. The message is to be transparent. I found many of the quotations incisive and helpful, such as Purgason’s (2009, p. 190) statement that “typical textbooks teach students the language of buying, but not charitable giving, complaining but not necessarily praising, and apologizing, but usually not forgiving.”

Chapter 4 groups requirements for “English teachers with integrity” under three categories: professional, relational and ministry. Professionally, a teacher needs communicative competence, linguistic knowledge, knowledge about the language learning process, and competence in teaching methodology. These were the skills on which “Bill” failed to achieve a good mark in Chapter 1. Readers can grade themselves on various scales such as their experiences and qualifications, the latter ranging from short certificate courses to tertiary qualifications. Under relational skills Dormer includes cross-cultural understanding, such as finding out differences between local beliefs and Christianity. Some of the advice goes beyond specifically Christian responses. What about cultural misunderstandings of the type where Western ‘standards’ clash with the local understanding, such as the one that says “no one fails a class, regardless of their level of learning or accomplishment” (p. 56)? Or a less excusable lack of preparation for the local context, such as assuming that the word ‘Arab’ has the same definition as ‘Muslim’. The ministry skills section has a number of suggestions, including the ability to mentor.

Chapter 5, “English teaching formats: Four models,” continues with information that would be helpful to a wider readership. There are examples of the difference between planning a programme (with several teachers), a course (one teacher, one group), tutoring or coaching (one-to-one), and finally planning special events. Each section is tantalisingly short; perhaps in the future Dormer might produce booklets or articles that expand each of them. In fact Chapter 6, titled “English classes: Three building blocks,” does expand earlier topics in three categories: curriculum, methodology and materials. I can imagine using the “ten tips for planning curricula for English ministries” (pp. 86-89) as a framework for a teacher training session on course design. Although most of the points are a useful summary of principles of curriculum, some are

less obvious. For instance, in the spirit of learner autonomy, Dormer recommends considering learning opportunities beyond the course being planned. Similarly, her recommendation to teach ‘developmentally’ addresses the need to “develop the person” (p. 90). This principle is expanded with examples.

The final chapter, “Putting it all together: Making decisions about English ministry,” starts with a brief summary of the issues set out so far, and then revisits these in the form of questions to be asked by those who have a personal calling. My personal preference would have been to see this content at the start of the book as an overview, but perhaps that might have tempted readers to skip the details. The chapters end there, but not the content. At 43 pages, the seven appendices are, collectively, more than a third the length of the main text. For teachers wanting something tangible to help them get started, there are many practical suggestions. Either the *English for Life Curriculum* in Appendix A or the *Topical Course Syllabus* in Appendix B could provide a basis for modification to a local context. Further on there are a sample lesson plan, a shortish appendix on organising an English camp, a list of resources and other handy references.

Dormer’s material for this book comes from three main sources: the current literature on language teaching and learning, published viewpoints on English teaching as mission, and original ideas from the author’s own experience. Some sources will be familiar to TESOL readers: H. D. Brown, Kumaravadivelu, McKay, and others. The experiences scattered throughout the book include some fictional and some actual examples. For instance, she describes working with elementary school children in a country where repetition was so engrained that asking a question led to its being echoed back to her (Chapter 3).

Comparisons will be made between this book and a similarly titled one by Snow (2001). The two authors share a nationality, a life purpose and the fact that both have spent lengthy periods teaching English outside their own country. Snow addresses the issues without including details of methodology, a topic he address in another book, whereas Dormer combines the two elements, using a discussion of the issues as a basis for presenting ‘how to do it’ sections. Since the two books complement each other, people interested in the topic would probably want to read both.

Dormer acknowledges that there are not always easy answers to complex issues but does not stand back from offering practical and sound advice. It would be a pity if the book’s

message about professionalism put off volunteers who do not claim to be classroom teachers, but rather conversational partners to individuals or friendship groups offered to language learners who are looking for native speakers with whom to practise English.

The contexts where this book could be useful are varied. So far I have recommended it to people involved in a church-based conversation group for immigrants in an English speaking country and to people teaching English at tertiary levels in a country where English is not the first language. The discussion and application section at the end of each chapter would also make the book useful as a textbook in a pre-service course for teachers.

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