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Language Policy and Planning in A Church-Sponsored ESL Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine language policy in privately funded church-sponsored adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the United States. Specifically, this study focuses on one church and how its policy prohibiting proselytization in the classroom is interpreted by its volunteer instructors. The aim of this study is not to critique the success or failure of these policies but instead attempt to observe, describe, and report the spectrum of resistance and acceptance of restrictions (indeed, if it is perceived as such) on the types of language permitted to be used in ESL classrooms. Findings show that volunteers have different interpretations about how the Christian faith should or should not be integrated into curriculum. These beliefs stem from their theological interpretations about religious conversion as well as the volunteers' self-reported depth of religious beliefs. No evidence of proselytization or religious activities was observed, showing that this locally-created policy was effective in its goal of separating the teaching of faith and language during ESL classes. This is significant because it represents, to date, the only example of the impact of explicit language policies studied in adult ESL church-sponsored programs.

Key words: language policy, church-sponsored ESL, proselytization, faith and ESL, community-based ESOL

Introduction

In the United States (U.S.), while having no official status, English reigns as the *de facto* language of the land. It is essential for citizenship, employment, forming friendships in a community, visiting the doctor – virtually all aspects of daily life. For the some 1.8 million immigrants per year and the 12.2 million permanent residents, learning how to speak, listen, read, and write remains a major barrier to integrating into U.S. society (McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007). Adult ESL learners often do not have the financial resources or time to enroll in academic institutions to meet their language needs. In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act was established, in part, as policy to address the literacy needs of these English language learners. As of 2006–2007, close to 500,000 adults were enrolled in some type of federally-funded state ESL class ranging from family literacy, life skills, civics, vocational, and workplace ESL classes (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010). Yet, for all students who are enrolled in such programs,

the demand far exceeds the supply. One study indicated that of the 176 ESL programs surveyed 57% had a waiting list, with some students waiting as long as three years to enroll (Tucker, 2006).

Community and faith-based volunteer-run organizations often fill the void for adults looking to improve their English abilities. Faith-based ESL programs such as Catholic Charities receive grants, and are therefore regulated by the federal government under Title 34 (C.F.R. §§ 75.52(c) (1), 2011). All grantees under the U.S. Department of Education comply with a regulation which stipulates that religious activities such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization (i.e., attempt to convert someone to one's own religion) must be offered in a separate time and place from language education funded by the grant. Proselytization activities can include: devotional exercises, handing out of religious materials, or any other action that favors one religion over another (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Many smaller faith-based organizations do not have the resources to fulfill all of the requirements to receive federal funding (Durham & Kim, 2019). Additionally, these programs may not wish to comply with policies that determine the role that faith plays in the classroom. Some researchers caution that it is the *de facto* policy of Christian ESL programs to use English as a medium for proselytization (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). The need for church-sponsored ESL programs to clearly represent the services they offer along with transparency about how adult ESL learners might be exposed to the belief systems of the religious organization is the focus of this study.

Literature Review

Language Policy, Practice, and Religion

Language policy can be considered both a social and cultural construct (Schiffman, 1996). Schiffman argues that to understand the complexities of these policies, one must take into account both the explicit and implicit dimensions to understand what he refers to as linguistic culture, “which is the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious strictures, and other cultural ‘baggage’ that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background” (p. 276, cited in D. Johnson, 2013, p. 4). Historically, the field of language policy and planning (LPP) has sought to understand the impetus for codified documents and the intention of the authors of such policies (see D. Johnson, 2013). In the last two decades there has

been a shift from a focus on the macro policies (e.g., government organizations, multinational companies, etc.) to the micro policies that locally spring forth. This was not to judge the success or failure of said policies but to see how they are interpreted or even rejected by language educators in classrooms. E. J. Johnson (2012) refers to this as *instantiation*, the ground level where policy and practice intertwine. In the local context, teachers and administrators can and do invent new strategies to cope with the realities of everyday problems they encounter with their learners.

Prior to the turn of the 21st century, very little research had been done examining the interplay of language, teaching, and religion. Ferguson (1981) notes that, historically speaking, Christianity affected the policy that its respective missionaries had towards how they shared the Bible. British Protestant groups translated the sacred text into local languages while Roman Catholics used Latin Bibles (Spolsky, 2003). Researchers like Spolsky (2003) posit that, “scholars interested in language contact were themselves so steeped in secularism that they did not easily become aware of the depth of religious beliefs and life” (p. 82). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) comment that while religion and language policy is not explicitly codified, the impact of missionaries on host cultures (e.g., Maori in New Zealand, indigenous language in Rwanda) is a form of linguistic imperialism having an ‘insidious effect’ on local language.

Snow (2013) counters the claim that “missionary colleges + English dominance = cultural imperialism” in his historical review of the Presbyterian-established University of Nanking in China (p. 108). In this case, the early university educators sought to create an educational system in which Chinese and English shared equal status. However, over time the school saw a shift towards prioritizing English. Chinese parents and students sought the benefits of an English education for English-dominated global trade, broadening future education opportunities in English-speaking countries, or the domestic prestige of an English medium of instruction education. Makoni and Makoni (2009) paint an alternative picture of English language dominance in Christianity in recounting the early work of African missionaries. The authors’ historical review shows new African languages emerged due to church planting by Protestant and Catholic missionaries and the missionaries’ codification of existing local languages. Further, these evangelists’ linguistic work into the complexity of African languages served as an appeal that Africans were not racially inferior to their European colonizers. Early missionaries also championed multilingual over an English monolingual sharing of the gospel so

that Africans would have access to the faith through their native languages. As such, an education in English was to serve as a bridge to the Christian faith. Similar to the aforementioned Chinese Christian university, the demand from parents in Africa that their children be educated primarily in English and not in alternative local languages gave rise to government-driven macro policy shifts. Ghana in 1957 and Malawi in 1969 codified English to be used in education which usurped local educators' micro policies that blended local African languages and English as the medium of instruction. The authors state, "compared to the impact of government language policy, community opinion, and the globalizing influences of media and education, the contribution of specifically Christian institutions adds little to the prestigious position of the English language" (Makoni & Makoni, 2009, p. 116).

Christian English Language Teaching and Proselytizing

The role that religion plays in the teaching of English, particularly by Christians both in the United States and globally, is fraught with controversy. Non-religious academics such as Varghese and Johnston (2007) are concerned that U.S. politics push "imperialist goals" which are "guided by an evangelical Christian agenda" (p. 6) which includes Christian English teachers. Others have accused Christian English educators as teaching with a hidden agenda. Edge (2003) declares:

The issue here, as I understand it, is one of transparency in the relationship between TESOL and evangelism . . . If such transparency is to be ruled out for tactical reasons, and the argument is that the end (saving souls) justifies the means (deception and manipulation), then I am simply bewildered, and finally repelled, by the morality of the stance being taken. (pp. 704–705)

Mirroring concerns about Christian English teaching missionaries' ulterior motives, Pennycook and Makoni (2005) conclude, "the teaching of English has become a lure to bring nonbelievers into missionary clutches . . . The use of English language teaching as a means to convert the unsuspecting English language learner" (p. 139). In direct response to Pennycook and Makoni, Baurain (2007) points out "there is almost no evidence presented that Christian teachers pursue their purposes dishonestly," noting that even the authors conceded that Christian websites they referenced were open about their religious objectives (p. 204). Canagarajah (2013) summarizes, "despite the best efforts of these well-respected scholars, their assumptions that religions are fundamentalist, faith-based teaching is aimed at converting students, faith cannot be

reconciled with reason, and religion motivates intolerance lead to distortion in their findings” (p. xxi). Such tension between two competing viewpoints is clear. Yet, as we will see next, empirical research surrounding the explicit and implicit policies of Christian English language educators is extremely limited.

Church-sponsored ESL

Settings for faith-based ESL programs have been categorized as *church-based* (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Chao & Mantero, 2014), *church-sponsored* (Kristjánsson, 2018), and *church-run* (Baurain, 2013). For the sake of this study, I will use the term church-sponsored as this study specifically focuses on a program that receives no government funding and thus is not beholden to federal regulations that would dictate how religious activities are integrated into ESL classrooms. It is also apropos given the church in the present study views ESL education as part of an outreach to the non-native English-speaking international community.

Durham and Kim (2019) provide a comprehensive overview of faith-based adult ESL programs in the United States. They quote Chao and Kuntz (2013, p. 16) noting that these programs are described as having “no constraints on [students] entering the programs such as no tuition fees, no prior academic experience, and no requirements to profess Christian faith or follow religious rituals.” It is most often the case that these programs are underfunded, offer little in the way of teacher training, and the volunteer instructors that join in these programs do so out of a desire to help newcomers adjust to life in the United States. Additionally, Durham and Kim note that these volunteer instructors often “walk a tightrope” between the multicultural values of the learners and the religious beliefs of the host organization.

Positioned as in an *emic* perspective on ESOL, Baurain (2013) investigates how church-sponsored ESL program Christian volunteers put faith into practice tutoring newcomers from Mexico and El Salvador. In his seven-month ethnographic case study, there was no evidence of proselytization during the classes observed. However, one tutor remarked, “if I am not able to express my faith, which is so foundational to who I am, the student would not be getting my whole picture of who I am” (Baurain 2013, p. 144). Church leadership promoted the ESL program as a way to engage in local missions yet there was no mention of explicit policies either encouraging or limiting faith-related discussions during tutoring sessions.

Chao and Kuntz's (2013) three-year ethnographic study into a church-sponsored ESL program revealed that Christian faith and ESL were intertwined. Class organizers actively integrated prayer, Bible study, hymns, and other elements of religious practice into the ESL program. Some of the participants who held different beliefs (e.g., atheists, Buddhists, etc.) felt that Christianity was being imposed upon them, thus inhibiting their participation, while others converted to Christianity. The researchers came to the conclusion that the church-sponsored ESL program was a platform for proselytizing and mission work.

Johnston's (2017) work asserts itself squarely in the center of the debate, offering a data-driven approach to investigate evangelical Christians' motivation, instantiation, and transparency in coaching English language teaching within a 'bible-based curriculum'. Johnston's year-long ethnographic study of Lighthouse, a mission-based Christian English language school in Poland, focuses on classroom observations of adult intermediate EFL Polish students (ages 20s to 50s) and their missionary instructors. The guiding questions of the investigation take square aim at the aforementioned long-standing critiques that Christians teaching English deceive the vulnerable in efforts to indoctrinate religiously-justified homophobic and colonialist values. Johnston's exploration of Lighthouse revealed a *whole-self* approach to teaching and learning English. Students used English as a medium to explore religious themes surrounding the source content (e.g., Defoe's classic, *Robinson Crusoe*) engaging in discussions of unusual emotional openness, atypical of Polish culture. Lessons were interjected with what Johnston refers to as 'mini-sermons', direct connections were made between course materials and Biblical scriptures, and all lessons appeared to end with prayers. While the teaching skills of each instructor varied, the study paints a clear picture of a school that wholly integrates evangelism into an EFL classroom; an approach which is fully and knowingly accepted by its students though no formal policy was mentioned in the study. Additionally, Johnston concluded that the notion of Christian ESL teachers 'converting' their students oversimplifies the mutualistic relationships in the classrooms at Lighthouse. It is worth noting that Johnston's most staunch criticism of the school, or rather some of the leadership of the school, came in the form of unsolicited prayer on his behalf:

. . . many prayers being said for me, both in my presence and when I was absent. There were times when, inwardly, I took offense – usually because a prayer or 'approach' overstepped what I consider the bounds of privacy (I am an extremely private person). (Johnston, 2017, pp. 38–39)

The concept of Christian prayer was integrated into class discussions and group prayers

concluded class sessions. One student viewed the prayers on her behalf to be a “great gift.” Conversely, when the author was prayed for in a group meeting, he interpreted it as a violation of trust.

Examining church-sponsored ESL in Canada, Kristjánsson (2018) interviewed representatives from three non-government funded Christian organizations. One of the churches’ adult ESL programs chose to actively incorporate the Bible into ESL classes, even providing bilingual Bibles to learners. The other two programs deliberately chose to exclude Christian materials from their curriculum as well as prayer and Bible use in the classrooms. One program went so far as to adopt the policy that all new members entering the program are directly informed of the ‘Christian orientation’ of the program which excluded public prayer as well as Christian content in the classroom. However, the inclusion of Christian values and perspectives as well as Christian holidays were acceptable. The program director emphasized, “Some schools start with prayer. We don’t . . . we don’t want to push anyone” (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 182). This policy was described to be born out of respect for the various religions represented in their student population. All of the church-sponsored ESL directors reported that they did not see covert proselytization as a goal of their programs but rather their programs are a practical way for them to show the love of Jesus to disadvantaged Canadian newcomers.

The Present Study

The following study describes the language policies set forth by the participating church, observes if these policies are adhered to in the ESL classrooms, and interviews a stakeholder administrator as well as volunteer ESL instructors (referred to as “volunteers”). The discussion is interwoven with the findings so as to link each instructor’s views of proselytization in general, in the ESL classroom, and their own personal beliefs on if, how, and when one’s personal beliefs intersect with their social lives.

This investigation adopts a qualitative ethnographic stance to investigate language policy and planning within church-sponsored ESL programs. I say ‘stance’ because, ideally, an ethnographic researcher will spend extended periods of time embedded in the *ethnos*, steeping themselves within a culture. Prolonged exposure leads to thick description (Geertz, 1973), hypothesis generation (Canagarajah, 2006), and reveals how language policy is interpreted by human agents on a local micro level (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

As E. J. Johnson (2013) summarizes, ethnographic research in LPP “provides a balance between policy power and interpretive agency” (p. 45), a perspective greatly needing representation in the discussion of how Christian English language volunteers express their spiritual and social agency (Dörnyei, Wong, & Kristjánsson, 2013).

The two research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) Are there explicit policies towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? If so, what are those policies?
- 2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors regarding proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program?

Methods

Program and Participant Profile

This ethnographic study was conducted on-site at Trinity Church (a pseudonym) during March 2019 and subsequent participant interviews took place in April via internet video chat. There are numerous church-sponsored ESL programs in the Southeastern U.S. but this site was selected due to my relationship as a member of the host church and the access that my status as an insider in the community grants. However, prior to the start of this study I had neither taught nor observed Trinity ESL classes, nor did I have any previous relationship with any of the participants.

Trinity ESL was founded in 1994, starting with two proficiency levels of learners and then expanding to the current four-level system. Since its inception, the program has had over 500 students and close to 150 volunteers participate. Similar to other faith-based ESL programs (Durham & Kim, 2019), Trinity ESL does not require students to hold a specific faith.

The adult ESL program meets twice a week from 7:00-9:00 pm on the church premises. The format of the meetings (Table 1) was typically as follows: some type of warm-up questions (e.g., *What did you do last weekend?* etc.), an introduction of vocabulary and model sentences (Group 1) or cultural topic prepared by a volunteer (Groups 2–4), a 20-minute coffee and light snack break combining all levels, and then a last game, topic, or other wrap-up activity for the final portion of the session. The break was held in a coffee-shop style room at the end of the hall of the classrooms. The administrator (Admin) stated that some years ago, a different group of church members from Trinity would bring food and drinks and remain during the break time to provide extra conversation for the attendees, but that did not happen during my observations.

Table 1. *General Timeline for Trinity ESL Sessions*

7:00-8:00	8:00-8:20	8:20-9:00
ESL Class (leveled)	Coffee/Snack Break (All levels)	ESL Class (leveled)

Over the last four years, the Admin of the program sought to shift the dynamics of the classrooms away from a teacher-centered design, referring to teachers as ‘volunteers’ and students as ‘members’. At the time of this study, the majority of members participating in the ESL program were comprised of newly arrived Venezuelan refugees, international scholars from several universities in the local area, and immigrants from Japan, Korea, Senegal, Syria, Croatia, Germany, and China. In a meeting with the Admin prior to observation, I was told that the member population of the program has been greatly influenced by the political climate. Refugees had made up a significant portion of the members in years past but since the changeover to President Donald Trump in 2017, refugees have almost completely vanished from the program (personal communication with Admin, 2019).

Members divide into four levels and each group typically meets in separate rooms, although when the upper-level groups 3 and 4 have low attendance, they will occasionally combine the groups. Those members who had been long-time attendees of the program and had achieved a relatively high level of English proficiency could shift and then become volunteers themselves. There was no mention of any language teaching training for volunteers either prior or during their time in volunteer service, however long they choose to volunteer for the program. Childcare service was provided, of which many members took advantage. Each room was equipped with a whiteboard. All participants sat around a group of combined collapsible white tables in a square formation. Each member would write their name on a folded piece of colored construction paper and stand it on the table space in front of themselves. While there was no assigned seating, leaders of each group requested volunteers and members be spaced out as evenly as possible. During my observations, the lower two levels had a member-to-volunteer ratio of 2:1 and the two upper levels were the opposite.

Four volunteer staff (V1-V4) of the Trinity ESL program (Table 2) were chosen as focal participants because they acted as group leaders during English sessions. While there were as many as five volunteers in a class, it was the group leader who was responsible for coordinating the activities for the class. During sessions, these volunteer leaders had the greatest amount of

Table 2. *Interview Participant Demographic Information*

Program staff and volunteers	Sex	Age	Profession	Prior ESL teaching experience	Location	Time at Trinity ESL program
Administrator	M	40	Full-time missionary, part-time ESL teacher	Yes	EFL Korea (6 years) & U.S. (4 years)	4 years
Volunteer one (V1)	M	30	Part-time ESL teacher	Yes	International Rescue Committee, Peace Corp, EFL China	7 months
Volunteer two (V2)	F	49	Writer/editor for a federal agency	Yes	2 church-sponsored ESL programs	4 years
Volunteer three (V3)	M	65	Project manager at engineering company	No	NA	3 years
Volunteer four (V4)	F	26	Medical assistant	No	NA	2 years

control and thus the greatest influence over the policies of their respective groups. As such, their stances on how Christian beliefs are, can, and should be practiced at Trinity ESL in relation to the existing policies in the program was of central importance to this study. While meetings between volunteers and members in the form of dinners, parties, and other social events outside of class were frequent and might also contain opportunities for volunteers to share or practice their religious beliefs, such interactions, while worth mentioning, are outside the scope of this study. The program Admin (Table 2) was also interviewed to compare volunteer leaders' interpretations with that of the creator/compiler of all official Trinity ESL policies. Approval was given by way of consent forms from the Admin, volunteers, and all members observed by the researcher. Additionally, this research was sanctioned by the governing body of the church sponsor and the researcher's institutional review board.

Data Collection

Data were collected on-site during four class sessions, one for each of the four levels.

Five 24–45 minute semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype, and the audio was recorded on an iPhone X microphone. The protocol for the interview (Appendix A) was adapted from a previous study about faith and practice in church-sponsored ESL programs (Baurain, 2013) and from research investigating pre-service Christian English language teachers' viewpoints on sharing their beliefs or converting their students (Varghese & Johnston, 2007). Interviews were recorded and then initially transcribed using *transcribe* ([www.https://transcribe.wreally.com](https://transcribe.wreally.com)), a web-based auto transcription service¹.

Observations were conducted over four evening sessions during March 2019. In each session a different group of learners was observed. Following McCarty's (2015) protocol for observation notes, verbatim quotes, gestures, and other comments were recorded by hand during sessions using a 'Rocketbook' smart notebook. This notebook allows handwritten documents to be scanned and sorted automatically and is erasable for reuse. Notes were then expanded into field reports 30 minutes after on-site visits to retain as much detail as possible from the event (Glesne, 2016). This data, along with reflections from all interviews was then input into a research journal. Artifacts related to Trinity ESL policy were provided by Admin (Appendix B) and information from the ESL program website was also included for analysis.

Analysis

The analysis for this study is based on language policy as linguistic culture (Schiffman, 1996). In this model, policy is examined by both explicit texts and stated beliefs as well as implicit attitudes that can influence stance toward the policy, how policy is interpreted, and how those factors influence practice (overtly or covertly). This was achieved using thematic analysis (Glesne, 2016) in which, through an iterative process examining all data collected, general patterns emerge.

The first round of data coding was derived from observation notes, field reports, researcher journal entries, and artifacts (e.g., Trinity volunteer agreement, Trinity ESL website) using Word document commenting functions. Volunteer responses to the protocol were summarized in an MS Word table for analysis of convergent and divergent patterns. Individual volunteer interviews were then coded using NVivo 12 in search of emergent themes. In the

¹ While the service is wonderfully convenient compared with traditional listen-and-type systems of transcription, each subsequent file generated by the program needed to be reviewed to correct errors in spelling, word choice, and general formatting.

second round of coding, emergent themes were then cross-referenced with patterns from first round coding and then reorganized into *explicit* (i.e., stated) beliefs and *implicit* attitudes towards Trinity ESL policies. These themes were further triangulated by cycling back and forth between observational data and artifacts. Relevant sections of artifacts were extracted and used as context to complement quotes that best encapsulated emergent themes. Follow-up emails and conversation between Admin and volunteers served as a form of member checking in which I requested clarifications on data.

Researcher Positionality

One major criticism in the field of ethnography of language policy is when researchers study a culture that is wholly foreign to them (D. Johnson, 2013). As a member (but not a volunteer instructor) of the host church for Trinity ESL, I have the unique position of viewing their language policy and practice from an emic perspective. This, however, comes with its own set of responsibilities unique to my relationship with this ESL program. As Rampton (2007) points out, “if you are researching people and institutions in the area where you are based, the kind of people you are studying may well turn up in your classes and/or read-and-reply to what you’ve written, and this provides quite strong incentives to hedge your claims and clearly specify their limits” (p. 591). I am, therefore, cognizant of the responsibility I have to illuminate policy and practice within the Christian community while at the same time to pursue this research with the scientific rigor that the academic community demands.

I see knowledge as being socially constructed between myself and my participants. This meant that I was more than just a ‘fly on the wall’ during on-site observations, thus I functioned as a researcher and resource in the classroom (Sarangi & Candlin, 2003). I interacted with both volunteers and members during class time both for the sake of developing rapport and offering skills as an ESL instructor when requested. My identity was constructed in the various communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) at Trinity ESL. With the members of Trinity ESL, I am a Caucasian native English speaker. In the United States this puts me in a privileged status which I took care not to abuse, but may have unduly influenced members’ willingness to join the classrooms that I observed. To volunteers, I was both a peer in the church and an outside researcher. While I assured anonymity in my report, our peer status may have caused less-than-candid responses from some members in order to save face in the church community. I have

attempted to mitigate my personal biases by representing the voices of the participants as often as possible to allow the reader to interpret and draw their own conclusions as to how volunteer beliefs interpret policy related to proselytization.

Results

Trinity ESL Policies

The guiding questions surrounding this exploration of policies at this church-sponsored ESL program are, 1) Are there explicit policies for proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program and if so, what are they? and 2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? Trinity ESL has a written agreement (Appendix B) between leadership and the volunteers in the program and it is that agreement which will be the focus of the explicit policies and attitudes towards proselytizing. Volunteer-stated attitudes towards proselytizing in email and interviews, my observation notes, field notes, and artifact comparison will attempt to uncover any implicit policies towards what forms of faith-sharing are acceptable and unacceptable at Trinity ESL.

Explicit Policies

Written Policy at Trinity ESL. While it had been the practice in the past, for the past several years new members (i.e., the learners) are not required to complete any paperwork that would indicate their personal beliefs. In other church-sponsored ESL programs, such practices were reported to pressure the students to falsify their religious identity to gain a greater position in the community (Chao & Kuntz, 2013).

All volunteers, prior to entering into an ESL session at Trinity, are required to sign an agreement outlining the expectations for how volunteers are to interact with the members of the program. The agreement ranges from general guidelines about contacting the Admin should a volunteer be late, creating a comfortable and equitable classroom for all volunteers and members, avoiding debate and critique, and other best practices. The most overt language in the document comes in the form of what is listed as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) *Ethics Program: Guideline for Working with International Students* (Article 10, The NAFSA Ethics Program, p. 11). The majority of the clause mandates that organizations that provide services for international students have “a clear statement of purpose and

responsibility” that is accurate and establishes a mutual dialogue between both parties. The final statement requires that “the organization should make clear that *surreptitious, deceptive, or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable*” (italics added, p. 11). This specific verbiage had been copied into the Trinity ESL volunteer agreement. Admin explained that, while there are updated versions of this NAFSA policy, the language in the older policy offered a “*stronger warning*” than current NAFSA documents.

According to Admin, before taking over of the program about four years prior, there had been no written agreement between Trinity ESL leadership and its volunteers.

So before I started pushing that policy and educating people about it, there are people that would come in and hand out literature like 1 John in different languages and assign it as homework. People that might have been overly looking for opportunities to educate people about the Christian faith. And so what I keep emphasizing is it’s we love inter religious education. That’s, that’s awesome. And we want people to learn about you know, where we’re coming from. I want to learn about other people are coming from. So the language is shifted to more of a mutual learning exchange that is based on an invitation. A clear invitation and waiting for the invitation to be received or waiting for an invitation for that. So I tell people err on the side of not sharing about – and since most of the volunteers are Christians – not sharing about the Christian faith in any way without making sure there is that invitation that it is welcome. And done in a way that is in spirit of mutual learning exchange not one way learning about Christian beliefs. (Admin, April, 2019).

Admin’s intentions in establishing written policies stemmed from both the mission organization through which he was currently employed and his own personal beliefs.

A commitment to ethics. And when I say that in those policies, it’s making sure nobody feels like pressuring them to convert. And then when I go over that with people I say, “assume that people might have the fear that we’re trying to do” . . . within that same ethics, making sure that we are transparent in our invitations to people. (Admin, April, 2019)

Interestingly, when the policies were first implemented in the Trinity ESL program, there was initial pushback from some of the current volunteers in the program. Admin said that some organizers went so far as to ask what the whole point of the Trinity ESL program was if they were restricted in how they could share their beliefs with the members. This prompted a group discussion.

We would talk about, what does it mean to love others, you know? And, we don’t just help the people that seem to be responding positively to Christian call, you know – it’s not love. And so that was very helpful in getting people to understand it. (Admin, April, 2019)

Current Stance Towards NAFSA Proselytizing Clause in Trinity Policy. Baurain (2007) says that the term proselytize “is made to carry connotations of a forced change of mind, outright deception or questionable persuasive techniques, or an indirect or unethical use of position or power to effect ‘changes of heart’” (p. 204). All four volunteers interpreted proselytization as having negative connotations. In their view, forcing Christian beliefs on another person runs counter to the types of nonconfrontational and open conversations that are needed to engage in a genuine dialogue about Jesus and his teachings. Volunteers associated proselytizing with the action of arguing or sermonizing; ways to pressure the other party into accepting the speaker’s beliefs.

Another closely-related synonym of *proselytizing* mentioned by Admin and others was the concept of ‘conversion’. To that end, Admin remarked that “*proselytizing is God’s work. Our work as the followers of Jesus is to proclaim the good news about Jesus.*” Similarly, Volunteer two (V2) commented, “*I don’t believe that it’s possible for me to convert somebody. So we’re getting into the theology here.*” The theological aspect mentioned here is a concept put forth by French theologian and pastor John Calvin known as *irresistible grace* which asserts that God’s call to convert a person can only come from God and not humans. Under such an assumption, V2 as well as Admin see that they have no power or responsibility to proselytize to members at Trinity ESL.

V2 offered the word *witnessing* as the more appropriate term for how she thinks Christian believers should share their faith.

Some ground rules for good witnessing: ask permission to share your story or share what you believe, be willing to listen to the other person’s story/beliefs, don’t attach any conditions to the other person’s response, don’t do it at a time when I should be doing something else (i.e., working or teaching an English class), don’t treat people like a project, speak with humility, and respect the other person’s culture. (V2, April, 2019)

With regards specifically to the Trinity ESL program, Volunteer three (V3) outlined that witnessing, more specifically “*a hearing*,” must be earned “*as we display servant behavior through the freely offered ESL program, along with genuine interest in the participants and their ‘stories’.*”

Explicit Policies Establish Trust. Most of the volunteers seemed to be thankful for the NAFSA clause at Trinity ESL. Volunteer four (V4) commented that without such a policy in place, local sending institutions (primarily colleges and universities) would lose trust in Trinity

ESL which would, in turn, damage their willingness to recommend the program to newcomers. In fact, other than the ties between Christianity and its connection to holidays in the United States, V4 actively shifts discussions away from religious topics.

I mean you can't force it on them. And then once you start down that path you kind of notice that their eyes glaze over and also is a possibility that their trust in us gets broken. (V4, April, 2019)

Volunteer one (V1) expressed his appreciation for the policy saying that members wouldn't respond well to pressure, *"especially with religion. Yeah, because I think religion is such an important part in like someone's – like – identity and what they believe."* One example of how members have been pressured into participation was in the form of corporate prayer. A member confided to V2 that *"she stopped going to other churches' programs because she felt like . . . they were praying all the time. And she felt kind of uncomfortable with that, and that's why she liked [Trinity ESL] . . ."*

This act-then-believe type of model would seem to function as a type of "training into faith," which is viewed by many at Trinity ESL with disdain. V2 continues, *"In general, there should never be coercion. Even when you're sharing your faith it should not be that coercive kind of setting."*

Explicit Policies Restrict. Not all volunteers were of the same mind regarding the NAFSA proselytizing clause. While V3 was in favor of being transparent about the goals and group activities at Trinity ESL, his general feeling was that the current policy may be too limiting for volunteers who wish to more directly speak about their beliefs with the members in their classes. In the view of V3, the NAFSA clause exists as a tool for recruitment at secular universities.

I'm not enough of an expert about this situation Admin is in as he recruits participants. Admin is pivotal to the program in his recruiting efforts [at Southern University] particularly. And other places, I know are under a bit of constraint regarding no proselytizing. So I understand why he needs something there. (V3, April, 2019)

Often V3 spoke in the hypothetical with regards to a desired change in Trinity ESL policy. This allowed him to not usurp Admin's authority while at the same time expressing V3's frustration at not being able to fully represent his faith to the members in his group. *"So I don't know that I would be presumptuous enough to say here's how I would change it. Love to be a little more unfiltered, you might say."* He also remarked that one of the results of removing this "limitation"

would be that volunteers could “*introduce [members] to the elements of our faith,*” which in turn “*could lead other people seeing more about what Christianity is about.*” V3 comments that such an approach may be a positive one for members who attend Trinity ESL and “*it may lead to some people saying, ‘This isn’t for me. I know where these people are going and I don’t want that,’ and they pull away. It’ll be all of the above.*”

V3 viewed the NAFSA policy and the restriction of personal discussion of religion in ESL classes as a necessary but undesirable tool for recruitment.

The Explicit Policy’s Influence on Classroom Practices. One assumption in many church-sponsored ESL programs, the Admin described, is that because ESL classes are being conducted in a church, the curricula will naturally be based around the teachings of the Bible. In Admin’s experience, other programs that he has worked on in the past have said, “they feel that they have the, that right” and that the members that join Trinity ESL “are happy that we don’t do it that way.” For volunteers like V4, the decision not to center ESL classes around Christian teaching but on themes of community and peacebuilding is a welcome one. She confided that she has been struggling with her faith over the last year. Trinity ESL does offer a specific time for discussions about the Bible and faith outside of ESL classes on Sunday mornings and V4 said, “I think my role doesn’t extend into Bible study. That’s ‘cause I don’t believe that I have the gifts for that. For me, I’m just at that beginning stage rather than the later stages.”

The addition of the NAFSA policy was not intended to repress or eliminate volunteers’ Christian beliefs from the class sessions.

I do . . . encourage the volunteers try to identify their faith . . . like say they’re talking about their weekend . . . don’t hide the fact that you spent time praying and don’t hide the fact don’t hide your religion out of your life. Just being normal and authentic just be very, make sure you’re not doing that in a way that’s making others feel like you’re pressuring them to accept your views. (Admin, April, 2019)

V4 interpreted the policy somewhat differently. She spoke of taking an active role that discussions of faith be discouraged from her group, “*if a student has questions on Christian beliefs. I try my best to be as gentle as possible . . . that the conversation doesn’t steer towards religion just because it’s uncomfortable for the students that really don’t care for it.*” Unlike V3’s views that volunteers might be able to have a more unfiltered conversation about Christian teachings, V4 tries to avoid all talk about any religion from both other volunteers and members in the class. The opinions of V4 were also mirrored by V1. He stated that the main reason he

likes volunteering at Trinity ESL is the program's emphasis on the broad themes of love and peacebuilding being at the center of classroom discourse, "*because everybody needs those, like, kind of messages in their daily life, too.*"

Turning our attention to V3, during my observations of his class, one of the members spent the better part of half an hour confiding with everyone his struggles and decision to quit his Ph.D. program. With a heavy heart he recounted the slights and jabs of his advisor over the course of two years until he finally, within the last week, reached his breaking point and quit. After he finished his story, V3 spoke to everyone expressing his appreciation for the students' openness to the group. He emphasized that if each person in the room took their turn sharing, they would hear more stories of "*unfairness and injustice.*" This could be interpreted as contextualizing the members' experience through a Christian lens. In the interview with V3 he commented on that specific moment in class.

I was – so you might say – trying to bring that Christian understanding of ‘sin is endemic to the race and all across the globe’. So that, to me, is an example how a Christian understanding of the world influenced how the conversation was driven. (V3, April, 2019)

While V3 didn't specifically comment that his language choice during this episode in class was restricted by the Trinity ESL policies, his motivation to share Christian teachings, without directly naming it as such, could be viewed as evidence of how policy shapes practice.

Explicit Policy Ongoing Management. For most volunteers, discussions about the policies and practices of Trinity ESL with Admin preceded the signing of the written agreement. Newcomer V1 remarked that it wasn't until a couple of months after he had already started volunteering that he was introduced to the written policies. In many respects, there was little difference between the Trinity ESL policy and the person who authored them (i.e., Admin). On a local level, this type of micro policy management is possible. In conversations with V1 prior to leading volunteering Trinity ESL classes Admin "was very clear on what he . . . wanted the classes to focus on . . . he doesn't want Trinity ESL to be so primarily focused on any specific religion . . . He wanted it to be more of an open community-based program."

One of the dual functions of the break time in the middle of classes is to gather volunteers together to discuss how classes are going. Volunteers frequently made note of how active Admin is in creating, monitoring, and enforcing policies. Sometimes policy management came in the form of verbal cautions from Admin during these meetings. V4 recalled one such meeting in

which the Admin warned,

Make sure you guys should know that your main purpose here is for ESL. It's not to practice evangelism in any way. If God is willing it, it'll happen on its own. This is not the setting for it . . . if it'll happen it's because we are leading toward Him informally by forming relationships with them not trying to be like, "hey, there's Christianity." (V4, April, 2019)

Even though V3 expressed his desires that the Trinity ESL policies be loosened so that he might feel more open to teach members his Christian faith, he reiterated several times his reluctance that current policies be modified saying, "*I'm not enough of an expert about this situation Admin is in as he recruits participants. Admin is pivotal to the program in his recruiting efforts.*" V3 seemed so sensitive to the policies that he even edited his language during our interview, "*I keep using the word student. Admin doesn't like us to use that terminology*" reiterating that the nomenclature had been officially changed from "students" to "members" when referring to learners in the Trinity ESL program.

Implicit Policies

Is Teaching ESL a Class or a Mission? Why does a Christian volunteer to participate in an ESL program? For V1, his faith had no bearing on his decision to pursue a career as an ESL educator. In fact, he described himself as "*not the most spiritual or religious person . . . if there was this, like, a scale one, two, three . . . I would say I'm probably like a two consistently, you know?*" His aim in second language teaching is tied to the classroom context. At Trinity ESL, V1's main focus during my class observation revolved around teaching culture and building community, whereas in his ESL teaching in other contexts, his goals were tied more closely to student employment and admissions to college. Similarly, V4's initial impetus for participating as an ESL teacher was "purely just volunteering" and not spiritually motivated. Durham and Kim (2019) suggest that some seek church-sponsored ESL as a leisure activity. Having been a recipient of ESL classes herself as a child, V4 felt a kinship with the members in her class because of her experience learning English as second language. She, like V1, also reported struggling with her faith as of late. If anything, V4 views her job in the medical field as the primary means in which she serves God. She reiterated that, if members at Trinity ESL have questions about Christianity, people like Admin would be more equipped to help them.

In classroom observations of both V1 and V4, topics tended to focus on things like current events such as a recent university exam scandal, cultural tidbits, Southern U.S. idioms, and holidays like St. Patrick's Day. In all of the discussions lead by these two volunteers, there was no active linking of conversation topics to Christian themes nor was religious imagery present on any materials that they provided to the members.

On the other hand, the two more experienced volunteers were quite direct about their Christian faith motivating their participation in the ESL program.

I definitely see [my faith] as a big part of my motivation, just to – you know – to help. And, because I've been given much, it's a way for me to give and maybe opportunities to share my faith with people. (V2, April, 2019)

It's back to, "reaching out to the immigrant, the poor, the, the refugee" – you know – those, those injunctions. To, "lift up the visitor among you and welcome them in" . . . My wife and I . . . we're both mission-minded people and this is something we see as part of that. (V3, April, 2019)

Both V2 and V3 were equally frank about the role that their faith played in their daily life. V2 explained that she is involved in her church, reads the Bible, and prays every day. Her faith influences her daily decisions, priorities, and how she treats others. While teaching the English language to newcomers to the U.S. is her focus, she explained that such things could not be done "*in isolation of spiritual purposes.*" Her image of how that manifests in the classroom comes in what she described as experiencing the love of Jesus through another person. In the Trinity ESL lower-level groups, the language levels of the members were so low that even basic conversations were a significant challenge. Pauses between warm-up questions like, "*What did you do today?*" were filled by V2 with a sincere and sympathetic smile. When the right response failed, all that was left between V2 and her members was experiencing the presence of another. Faith plays an active part in V2's daily life but at the same time she was comfortable with excluding religious activities from Trinity ESL classes.

When asked about the role faith plays in his daily life V3 declared, "*It starts in the morning and it goes to the end of the day when I lay down again. It's all the way through.*" While other volunteers described their participation in Trinity ESL using words such as service, volunteering, and ministry, V3 made known that he viewed teaching as part of a general calling for all Christians.

I think the Christian has a mission and it's a clear mission. And, every Christian I think feels a sense of telling somebody else, "I'm a beggar like you but I found where the bread is. Here's the good news you've been waiting for." Every Christian, every Christian ESL teacher . . . member or not, will do that. (V3, April, 2019)

V3 had two perspectives for the purposes of church-sponsored ESL: 1) improving general English ability through accent reduction and increased vocabulary; and 2) giving newcomers a place to meet and connect in a community. In his closing comments to his group during class, V3 expressed his appreciation for the gathering, sharing, and being part of this community. Taking into account his desire to somehow meld the sharing of the Gospel with ESL classes, the previous story between V3 and the doctoral student member could be seen as an act of compassion or an opportunity to connect the students' problems to the teachings of the Bible in a type of 'mini-sermon' (Johnston, 2017) evangelism.

What emerges from juxtaposing V2 and V3 with each other is a continuum of deep faith and motivation to share that faith with others. If, how, and where such evangelism should take place seemed to depend on their motivation for volunteering. V1 and V4, on the other hand, preferred to keep their role in the classroom separate from any type of evangelistic or mission-oriented ambitions.

Prayer as Implicit Policy. Most volunteers described prayer as a primary expression of their faith both personally and as a non-imposing way to connect with ESL members. In the warm-up activity for one of the lower-level groups, the members expressed their sadness for the political strife in their home country in recent news. V2 clapped her hands together and said that "[she] will pray" for them. This was the only time I directly observed mention of prayer in any of the ESL classrooms.

Yet, there appeared to be a distinct difference in policy between praying *for* someone and praying *with* someone. Admin relayed that several members have expressed their appreciation for not incorporating group prayer into ESL classes. V1 commented likewise.

. . . that's why I like volunteering [at] Trinity ESL because they focus a lot more on – like – the stuff with prayer. And – you know – the Christian focus is more – like – behind the scenes. (V1, April, 2019)

Soliciting prayer requests from members, though not present during my observations, appeared to be well integrated into the fabric of Trinity ESL. V2 said that it was common practice for her to, "*ask students if they had things that [they] need, to let them know that we had a group that*

prayed for people, [that] is a part of the program.” Even V4, who frequently expressed a desire to avoid religious conversations in class communicated her desire to both pray and relay requests to prayer ministry at the church.

I’ll specifically say those words and then I’ll say, “However, since we are Christians, we do want to pray for you guys. If you have any prayers that you’ll be okay with us sharing with each other so we can pray for you, please let us know. It doesn’t have to be like right now. You can just text it to me or maybe you can tell me after class, I’ll leave it up to you.” And in a lot of cases students won’t tell us obviously just because they’re kind of a little hesitant to do so . . . or maybe you’re talking and they say hey, “I actually have court next week because of a ticket,” and I’ll say, “Oh, hey, well I’ll be praying for you. It’s okay if I pray for you?” and they’ll say, “Oh yeah. Sure. I’ll take what I can get.” (V4, April, 2019)

The member’s hesitancy in these situations may represent a member caught between wanting to refuse a prayer request, but choosing silence instead of disrupting relations with volunteers at Trinity ESL.

What might not be known to the members at Trinity ESL is that it is, in fact, the policy of the program that volunteers actively pray. In the written agreement volunteers initial that they will 1) “pray for the group, the class, and the members,” and 2) “Try to email or text Admin one prayer request each week for you or the members or the ministry for email prayer to pray for” (see Appendix B). Yet, the program website makes no mention that members will be solicited in this manner. In interviews there was the feeling that, while requesting and then sharing the needs of the learners to Christians was an acceptable practice, the members themselves would not be pressured into verbalizing those prayers during class time. In this way, prayer takes on two dimensions – prayer as a class activity, and prayer as a private request. Speaking to the latter, Admin remarked, “*Praying for people to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior is as close to proselytizing as I go.*”

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine 1) Are there explicit policies towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? and 2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors regarding proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? With regards to RQ1, Trinity adopts a policy that is consistent with NAFSA guidelines which make explicit that there shall be no attempt on the part of the volunteer to proselytize to the student.

The results of examining the explicit and implicit policies and attitudes towards proselytization at church-sponsored ESL in this study have revealed that, by and large, explicit written policy with ongoing local management of that policy has had a homogenizing effect on volunteer teachers. Trinity ESL is not beholden to the policy, rules, and regulations of a U.S. federally funded faith-based ESL program, namely, that religious worship, instruction, or proselytization take place separately from services supported by the grant. However, the locally created policy and practices at this faith-based ESL program strictly separate explicitly religious activities from language classes.

Some of the volunteers welcomed the separation of teaching Christian doctrine in ESL classes because they didn't feel comfortable teaching language through religion. Others saw the policy as inhibiting their mission as a Christian but acquiesced nonetheless. This may have been so that they can stay connected to volunteer activities of their home church rather than search for a different church-sponsored ESL program which actively integrates Christianity into the ESL curriculum. Acceptance, resistance, or ambivalence towards policies also seemed to be largely influenced by each volunteer's theological interpretations of how people become believers in Jesus Christ. This reveals that how Christians share their faith through ESL largely depends on if they feel it is their personal responsibility to convert a student or if that power resides with God.

According to Baurain (2007), "True conversion is thus a personal decision to change core beliefs. It cannot be forced, imposed, or manipulated; indeed, the use of false, distorted, or perverted tactics would yield false conversions and be self-defeating (as history attests)" (p. 215). This perspective makes one ask the question, is *coercive, surreptitious, or deceitful proselytizing* even possible? The NAFSA policy indicates as much. Given that participation in any church-sponsored ESL program is completely discretionary, if learners are uncomfortable at any point because of conflicts in religious beliefs, they can simply stop attending. Most church-sponsored programs cost very little money (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Durham & Kim, 2019; Kristjánsson, 2018) and do not offer any type of certificate of completion. On the other hand, given the high cost of formal ESL classes or the lack of availability in non-religious community-based ESL (Tucker, 2006), learners might feel that they have no choice but to conform to a Christian community – whether they "truly believe" or not. Turning back to the words of Baurain (2007), and citing the cautions from Snow (2001),

The greater danger lies in CETs [Christian English Teachers] being insufficiently aware of how the power inherent in their roles affects the way students respond to their interest in proclaiming the gospel, whether in or outside class. In one such scenario, students gradually discover that the CET is very interested in sharing his or her faith, and tends to be quite pleased when he or she has a chance to do so. This gently tempts students to express an interest in Christianity in order to get on the teacher's better side and get what they want (better grades, more chances to practice English, whatever). (pp. 76–77)

In light of this power imbalance between volunteer and member, it is all the more important that programs like Trinity ESL carefully consider the role of prayer as a type of *soft* proselytization. Since the primary goals of Trinity ESL center around building a community for newcomers, this would include making sure that the physical and emotional needs of the community are being met. The Bible teaches Christians to bring such prayers before God in submission and thanksgiving. However, prayer, regardless of one's religious affiliations, is a highly intimate conversation. As we saw in Johnston's (2017) experience at Lighthouse in Poland, unsolicited prayer, no matter how well intended, may provoke intensely negative reactions. In church-sponsored ESL programs, when members disclose their personal problems during the course of a class, sharing such sensitive information with others in the church community, even though well-intentioned, may be a violation of the student's privacy. This can be mitigated by policy revision and/or teacher training which outlines the timing and function of prayer, if it is to be included in Christian language classrooms.

In the classroom, Christian English language educators, novice or seasoned, instantiate policy based on a multilayered identity. Kubanyiova (2013) describes this identity as a person's "past personal and professional histories, present beliefs, emotions and dispositions, as well as their future images in relation to the multiple contexts in which their activities are situated" (p. 90). While much attention has been given to how members of organized religion express their beliefs when teaching ESL, in all classrooms, as identities mix within a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) they form the linguistic culture (Schiffman, 1996) from which policy springs forth. As a future Christian ESL teacher in Varghese and Johnston (2007) points out, "In the field of TESOL, you know, the thinking that you shouldn't influence people's values or beliefs is in itself a belief and a value . . . All teachers aim to change their students, and all have an implicit or explicit agenda," to which the authors rebut, "as atheists, we feel no urge whatsoever to convert others to our views nor even to share our beliefs" (p. 26). Kristjánsson (2018) views those in Western academia who do not hold traditional religious beliefs as significant

stakeholders in asserting their philosophical stance of secular humanism and scientific behaviorism (Gross & Simmons, 2009). Goheen (2009) goes so far as to say that this “religion of secular humanism domesticates traditional religions” and that this religion “eliminates rival truth claims and competing visions of the world by finding a non-threatening place for those rival stories” (p. 70). Such a view raises the question, are policies that restrict faith-based organizations from integrating religious activities into ESL attempting to relegate their deeply valued spiritual beliefs to Sunday worship services?

This study revealed the need for deeper, longer-term observations. It was also limited to discussion with volunteers and the Admin. Future studies that combine members’ perceptions and perspectives on policies in Christian ESL would give greater insight into implicit practices of these programs. Language policy and planning researchers also recommend that ethnographic research on policy be conducted at multiple sites (E. J. Johnson, 2013). This could even include faith-based organizations (e.g., Catholic Charities) that are government-funded and therefore subject to the policies of the U.S. Department of Education. One major topic revealed in this study is the function of *prayer* in Christian ESL. Future research could examine *de facto* or *de jure* policies towards prayer both within the classroom and on a larger organizational level.

While some studies exist that examine future ESL teachers at Christian universities (e.g., Varghese & Johnston, 2007), future research investigating how missionaries are trained by mission organizations to teach ESL both in the U.S. and English as a foreign language would paint a larger picture of the interplay between Christianity and teaching English to non-native speakers.

Conclusion

When it comes to integrating faith into the classroom, similar to results in Lessard-Clouston (2013), Trinity ESL volunteers reported that a generous attitude and sharing life experiences were the most frequent avenues for expressing their faith with their members. This expression of faith was done with the intent to not impose the volunteers’ beliefs during class time – as doing so would be a violation of Trinity ESL policy. Policies regarding prayer and its role in adult ESL education may be a form of proselytization. However, as Baurain (2007) contends, “All teachers proselytize in the classroom, that is, whether consciously or

unconsciously, they try to persuade students by words and actions to accept their beliefs and values . . . they do so with an often evangelistic fervor or missionary zeal” (p. 209).

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

(adapted from Varghese & Johnston, 2007, and Baurain, 2013)

ESL

- 1) Describe your professional status at present.
- 2) What ESL teaching have you been involved with and where? How long at Trinity ESL?
- 3) What about your background, in particular, led you into ESL teaching?
- 4) Has your Christian faith played any part in your motivations for starting or continuing as an ESL volunteer? What and why?
- 5) What do you believe is the purpose of teaching ESL?

Faith and ESL

- 6) What part do your religious beliefs play in your daily life?
- 7) *Generally speaking*, what do you think is the place of religion and religious beliefs in teaching and education?
- 8) Has your Christian faith played any part in your choices of teaching methods or curriculum? What and why?
- 9) Have there been specific moments in which your religious beliefs influenced your decisions, choices, and actions in the classroom and/or with your students? Can you describe such moments?

Policy, Faith, and ESL

- 10) Which policies at Trinity ESL Peace stood out to you (negatively or positively)?
- 11) If you could make a new policy related to language and language teaching, what would it be?
- 12) In the agreement that all volunteers sign before starting the ESL program, there is a specific area about the NAFSA guidelines. How do those guidelines affect your language in the classroom; particularly the statement, “there shall be no coercion to change [members’] religious beliefs.”

13) To what extent do you think a person has the right or the responsibility to let others know of his or her religious beliefs? (Is this in fact a right or a responsibility?)

14) Similarly, do you think a person has a right or a responsibility to try to convert others to his or her religious beliefs?

15) What do you think sets this program apart from non-religious ESL classes or programs?

Appendix B: Trinity ESL Volunteer Policy and Related Documents

1. Trinity ESL Volunteer Policy

I agree to interact with members according to the following outlined expectations:

You will email or text Admin to let him know about any interactions that you plan to have or unexpectedly have had with the Trinity ESL members from other countries outside of class or off the Trinity Community Church campus. _____

Try to email or text Admin one prayer request each week for you or the members or the ministry for the email prayer team to pray for. _____

You will read and follow the NAFSA Guidelines (at the end of this document) for interacting with international students and apply the same guidelines to your interactions with any of the members at Trinity ESL. _____

You will contact Admin or your class coordinator if you are unable to make it or if you will be late. _____

You will not bring people with you to help volunteer without approval from Admin or the class coordinator. _____

You will contact Admin if you feel uncomfortable during your volunteer experience. _____

Volunteers will avoid communicating with other volunteers in front of the members about topics, or stories, or in levels of English fluency, that are not comprehensible for those members. Avoid communicating in ways that exclude the members round you from participating in communication. _____

You are expected to leave any interaction immediately and contact Admin if you feel unsafe for any reason during your interaction. _____

You are encouraged to interact and build friendships with members and invite them into your lives, homes, churches, and ministries. You are expected to focus your interactions on the ESL members from your own gender when you are outside of the class or off the church campus. This is not a place for finding a date. _____

2. Trinity ESL Levels “Groups”

Group 1: Members are learning basic English conversation.

Group 2: Members are able to communicate back and forth in conversation. However, they are

making many mistakes. And they have limited vocabulary. This groups relies heavily on breaking the members up into pairs or small groups. Study values and storytelling.

Group 3: Members are able to discuss social issues and explore American cultures with deeper conversations despite making some mistakes in speaking and comprehension. Intentional focus on peace education.

Group 4: Members are nearly fluent and able to keep up with deep explorations of American society and cultures with peace education.

3. Classroom Volunteer Expectations

Group leaders and group members will communicate with each other regularly about the class expectation, volunteer roles, and lesson plans. _____

You are encouraged email reflective journal entries after each class to Admin and/or contact him for further assistance or questions as much as needed. _____

Group leaders will try to facilitate the involvement of volunteers in different roles throughout the semester. _____

Collect feedback from members and bring ideas to group leaders. _____

Ideally, each volunteer would follow up with at least one member over the week. _____

Pray for the group, the class, and the members. _____

The members at Trinity ESL from other countries are all expecting you to help them improve their ability to communicate in English. They want you to help in ways that empower them to speak and actively learn. So please communicate and behave in ways that empower the members to speak and actively learn in class. Some examples of these communication expectations are:

If you are a classroom volunteer, you will try to restrict your speaking in class to less than 20% of the class time. If there are other volunteers in the class, you will share that 20% limit. _____

Be a communication and exploring facilitator for the members. _____

Provide a safe comfortable community for members to communicate and explore. _____

Safe places usually require a recognition that every person is a unique, complex, and multicultural individual that experiences thought and emotion. _____

Safe places typically avoid debate until trust is established, and safe places try to validate other people's feelings and thoughts with respect and good listening. _____

Try to be assertive about how you feel and think without communicating that your feelings and thoughts are the way others should think and feel. _____

Don't critique or correct in ways that embarrass members and volunteers. _____

Use active listening often in large group, small group, and pair-work activities. _____

4. Trinity ESL Volunteer Program Volunteer Application

Your Personal Contact Information:

Name _____ Age _____

Home Address _____

City: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Church you currently attend: _____

Pastor's Name and Phone (for reference):

Names and numbers of three other references:

1. Name _____

Relationship _____

phone _____

2. Name _____

Relationship _____

phone _____

3. Name _____

Relationship _____

phone _____

Do you have any training or past experience with international students or refugees? Do you speak any other languages? (Please explain).

5. NAFSA Ethics Program (Article 10, The NAFSA Ethics Program, p. 11)

Guideline for working with International Students

When members share their faith with internationals there shall be no coercion to change their religious beliefs. Members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the ethical standard outlined in the 1993 NAFSA/Association of International Educators Code of Ethics, particularly section 10:

Members with responsibilities in Community Organizations working with Foreign Students and scholars shall:

- a. Make certain that organizations providing programs for foreign students and scholars have a clear statement of purpose and responsibility, so that all parties can know what is expected of them.
- b. Accurately portray their services and programs, making clear the identity, the intent, and the nature of the sponsoring organization of each particular event or service.
- c. Provide appropriate opportunities to observe and to join in mutual inquiry into cultural differences.
- d. Provide adequate orientation for volunteers and participants in community programs so that they may understand each other and may interact constructively. The organization should make clear that surreptitious, deceptive, or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable.