

Matthew Smith  
Professor Criag Fee  
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### Teaching English as a Missionary Language

This article I found fascinating due to the opposite poles that pull on each other. The article wrestles through the thesis statement: is teaching english an evangelistic tool or polictial colonialism? As I read through this article, there was a war in me, there are people creating innovative ideas to introuduce Jesus to the world. However, does the Jesus I know from the gospels and book of acts, choose one language to ultimately make the world universal? Simply look at pentecost and the answer is no.

The first half of the article argues that ESL classes and evangelism have been co operating together since the 19th century. And how the bible and english have been undeniably linked throughout the history of the bible being available to all people. Now the journal acknowledges that the bible is being translated into all languages rapidly, but according to the author, english is seen as letting someone get closer to God. The author writes, “On the one hand, English was seen as an intrinsically Christian language—‘the language of the Bible’<sup>1</sup>—the learning of which would bring people closer to God” (Pennycook). When reading this quote I was thinking could anyone really thing that english is the language of heaven! Not only would this probably be biblically wrong (my money would be on Hebrew) people tend to see American culture as this prerequisite to knowing God. The last time I checked no one comes to the father except though Jesus a Jew, we do not come through english and American culture.

The next issue raised was how ESL teachers who are less trained in educational experience and cultural understanding are preferred over local bilingual teachers. This decision is stressed because the countries are convinced along with the programs that native english speakers are preferred. Not only are less trained english native speakers preferred but they are also paid more than the local counterparts. Now my fear is, once again, are we really

evangelizing or are we focused on english as a political tool? Our God is a redeemer of people and culture. God does not pick a nation to create a one world utopia in the name of God. The bible says every tribe, nation and tongue will represent heaven. Therefore, I find this model of ESL native teachers being preferred for accent rather than equipping locals and letting them teach and evangelize. We should be partnering to empower the locals not rob their jobs and get paid more.

In closing, we have to think through how our Christian service ideas portray Jesus Christ. If we do not think through colonialism in all our services then we have to remove Jesus' name attached to the service. It does more harm than good. Ask the nation of Rwanda what happens when colonialism and Jesus are mixed. Now I do not want to beat up creative ideas that introduce Jesus to the world, especially outside the four walls. But we must analyze how we fulfill the great commission. We need to look at discipleship through empowering the locals of every country we visit to do the work. Paul planted the churches and left the local in leadership. He did not stay and force Philippi to look and sound like Jerusalem. I had a thought reading this article that if we go on mission to spread the gospel but we spread american culture than it sounds more like the creation of the tower of babel rather than the great commission.