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ENGLISH FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Lynn Henrichsen

Introduction

English for Latter-day Saints is a special English as a second or foreign language program designed especially for use by non-English speaking members of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As Church leaders who speak different languages come into contact with each other, they often feel and express the need for greater proficiency in English, the commonly recognized language of international communication. English for Latter-day Saints, an English language learning program centered around LDS situations and gospel topics has been created to meet this need.

History

The beginnings of English for Latter-day Saints can be traced back to Munich, Germany where President Harold B. Lee, speaking at the Europe area conference in August 1973, said, "Think how it would be helpful if every one of you speaking your native tongue would learn to speak English. I would like to challenge you to do that. Then we will be able to talk with you more clearly and we could understand better. . ."

Halfway around the world, in Korea, President Lee's challenge was received by President Rhee Ho Nam, then president of the Seoul Korea Stake. Phase one of the English for Latter-day Saints program was initiated a few months later at the request of Church members in Korea who wished to improve their English speaking and listening skills in Church situations as they prepared for the upcoming Korea area conference.

In January of 1974, the Church Educational System asked the faculty of Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus (then the Church College of Hawaii) to develop materials for the program. A faculty committee was formed to prepare a design statement and begin writing the first lessons.

President Rhee Ho Nam visited the BYU-Hawaii campus in April of 1974 and, after returning to Korea, selected twenty Korean Church leaders to be the charter group of students to use the program which at that time was called English for Korean Saints.

The materials developed by the committee were first pilot tested with a group of Korean Saints in Laie, Hawaii, and then, in May 1975, the English for Korean Saints program was inaugurated in Seoul, Korea. The participants in the program included two members of the Seoul Korea stake presidency, five members of the high council, the stake executive secretary and stake clerk, four bishops and a branch president, four counselors in bishoprics or branch presidencies, and two other Church leaders. The twelve-week course concluded in August, 1975, shortly before the Korea area conference.
At the end of the course, an evaluation of English for Korean Saints was conducted. Based on the conclusions of this report, and after a discussion with President Rhee Ho Nam in Hawaii, a formal proposal for a second series of language lessons was submitted to the Church Educational System. The CES accepted and funded this proposal in September of 1976. With this funding came a commission to produce Church-related ESL materials that could be used with the highest possible efficiency, not just in Korea, but in any country. Hence, the new title of the series—English for Latter-day Saints.

The phase two English for Latter-day Saints writing committee, composed of selected members of the Division of Communications and Language Arts at BYU-Hawaii, began materials design and production in January 1977. A finished set of materials was ready for distribution in March of 1978. These materials were taken to Korea and Japan in April of 1978, and three pilot classes were set up—one each in Seoul, Korea; Tokyo, Japan; and Kobe, Japan. A subsequent request for an E-LDS class in Pusan, Korea resulted in a set of materials being sent to that city also.

Currently, English for Latter-day Saints is in its third phase—a complete revision of the English for Korean Saints materials. This phase will result in a set of materials on a lower level—comparable to that of the original English for Korean Saints materials. When this phase is completed, English for Latter-day Saints will consist of two sets of English teaching/learning materials, one at a slightly higher level of difficulty than the other.

Material Description

Each student set of the original English for Korean Saints materials consisted of three books—Conference Listening, Listening Competency, and Dialogs, Readings, and Grammar Notes—accompanied by a set of cassette tapes. In addition, there were four teacher's books—one to accompany each student book plus a general How to Conduct English for Korean Saints teacher's manual.

After these materials were used and evaluated in Korea, it was decided that a consolidation and reorganization was in order. Each level of the current English for Latter-day Saints materials consists of two student books—Basic Lessons and Conference Listening—with teacher's manuals. This printed material is accompanied by seven cassette tapes—four to accompany the Basic Lessons and three as an integral part of the Conference Listening program.

Each of the twenty-five basic lessons has six parts. It begins with a reading passage (transparency number one) which has been selected for its inspirational as well as instructional value. The selections come from original Church sources, such as the Ensign, general conference reports, Church history, the writings of General Authorities, and Church leadership manuals. Although difficult passages are avoided, those chosen are not simplified. They represent the "real world" Church language which Church leaders (even in non-English speaking countries) commonly encounter.
Each of these readings is accompanied by a glossary (transparency number two) of the more difficult terms which it contains. The definitions are kept as simple as possible without reducing their accuracy and are limited to the particular meaning employed in the passage except when that meaning is unusual. Since these E-LDS materials are intended for use in a number of different countries, native-language translations are not used. Each definition is followed by a sentence which illustrates the vocabulary item in another, gospel context.

After students have read the selection and worked through the glossary, they encounter comprehension questions (transparency number three) based on the reading, and discussion questions, whose purpose is to provide a beginning for in-class discussion and conversation.

Next come three dialogs (transparency number four) and the first line of a fourth dialog (transparency number five). The first three dialogs, which are all related to the topic of the reading selection and which often utilize and reinforce vocabulary covered in the glossary, present English in a natural, gospel-oriented context. Students learn the first three dialogs and then develop a fourth dialog, both individually and as a class, thus employing the vocabulary and grammar they have learned earlier. In producing this fourth dialog, students create novel utterances by combining and changing what they have already learned in the preceding dialogs. Their use of English is purposeful and situational as well as creative. In this respect it is interesting to note the resemblance between the EKS and E-LDS materials and the currently popular notional-functional approach to language teaching.

A fifth part of each lesson is the grammar note (transparency number six). The grammar notes rarely exceed one page in length and focus attention on a single aspect of English grammar. They serve to reinforce the grammar which has been presented in an indirect fashion through earlier exposure in each lesson, and they also help prepare the students for the final part of the lesson--the writing task (transparency number seven).

The writing tasks, designed to meet the expressed letter-writing needs of EKS students, follow a guided composition format. The student is given a model (usually a sample of Church correspondence) which he must manipulate according to instructions. However, the task involves more than simply following directions. Because of linguistic interrelationships, one change often requires other changes. For example, in the sample shown, task 1: B requires students to change announcement to announcements. This simple change results in the necessity of deleting the article an and changing the verb form from the singular is to plural are. In these tasks, students gain an awareness of the grammatical interrelationships in English and are forced to rely on their overall knowledge of its grammar.

A set of cassette tapes accompanies the twenty-five basic lessons. They present, in an audio format, the readings, questions, and dialogs of each lesson, thus providing reinforcement through a second sensory mode. These tapes also make it possible for students to study and practice English away from the classroom--even though they are not in an English-speaking environment.
The teacher's manual which accompanies the basic lessons offers a variety of resources to the teacher, ranging from a short history of the project to a diagnostic test of oral English proficiency. The major portion is devoted to suggestions—both general and specific—for teaching English to speakers of other languages. Most of the general suggestions—originally designed for missionaries faced with the prospect of teaching English as part of their proselyting effort in foreign countries—would be helpful to any untrained teacher of English as a second language. The specific suggestions are based on the experience gained from using the materials with a pilot class on the BYU-Hawaii campus and provide even a beginning teacher with the background requisite to success in teaching an E-LOS class for the first time.

The second student book in English for Latter-day Saints is entitled Conference Listening and consists of six lessons centering around talks delivered by General Authorities in general conference (transparency number eight). Before listening to each segment of a talk, the student is prepared for the listening task by being introduced to the more difficult vocabulary contained in the passage and by being given a purpose for listening, in the form of a question to be answered. For example, in the sample shown (transparency number nine) the student listens to the glossary items on the tape and then is asked "What two reasons does President Tanner give for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City?" After listening to the recorded segment of the talk, the student stops the tape player and writes down his answer. Then, he starts the player again and can listen to the correct answer given on the tape. In this manner, the student fills out a worksheet for each lesson. Since the answers are not found anywhere in his book, the student must arrive at the answer to each question through successfully listening to either the talk itself or the oral answer on the tape.

The teacher's book for Conference Listening (transparency number ten) is exactly the same as the student book with one important exception—it contains the transcripts of the General Authorities' talks and the correct answers to the questions. Needless to say, this timesaving feature is appreciated by the volunteer teachers who donate their time to the program.

E-LDS Teachers

In producing these materials, the E-LDS committee has kept in mind the kind of teachers who will probably be using them. Although the teachers of English for Latter-day Saints classes have been native-speakers of English and most of them have had the experience of learning at least one foreign language, few have had any formal training as language teachers. Therefore, it was decided that classroom materials following a more traditional format would be easier for them to teach and lead to greater success in the classroom.

Successes of the Program

The success of the EKS and E-LDS programs have been rewarding. The original English for Korean Saints program may have enjoyed its great
success because of two important, but external factors (1) the enthusiasm and dynamism of President Rhee and (2) the pressing need to learn English created by the upcoming Korea area conference. EKS participants overwhelmingly reported that their speaking, listening and reading skills had improved. All aspects of the program received a high rating in effectiveness and interest. A statistical report of their feelings is contained in the English for Korean Saints Evaluation of Phase I report published in October of 1975. Comments made by program participants as part of this evaluation add a more personal note to the figures. Here are a few of their remarks:

"I have got rid of my fear of using English and have gained confidence."

"In listening, before the ESL class I couldn't understand the Church leaders speak. But when I went to a stake leadership meeting at the fourth ward and heard President Till speak, for the first time I could understand a substantial part, maybe 70% of what he said. I could also understand quite a bit of what President Kimball said in the Melchizedek Priesthood meeting of the area conference."

"I was able to talk with the General Authorities in the area conference and understand what they said. For example, I was able to answer questions of Brother Cullimore about the Church in Korea."

"As a bishop I am now able to discuss our building project in English with Brother Pearson, the building coordinator. So now we can get better cooperation."

"The things I have learned will help me to ask or read about the Church policy in English, and to talk with visiting Church leaders, and especially to discuss Church business with the missionaries."

Participants also appreciated the inspirational value of the materials. Here is what one said in this regard:

Through this program my own testimony has been strengthened. For example, when I learned in the listening materials that the Mexican Saints sacrificed a lot to attend the Mexico area conference, their faith motivated me to strengthen my testimony. I'll remember the story about the 48-hour bus trip to the Mexico area conference forever.

In April of 1978, three English for Latter-day Saints classes were started. The one in Kobe, Japan was completed successfully. The second, in Tokyo, is still going on, and the third, in Seoul, Korea, got off to a good start but after a few months was postponed. The lack of pressure to learn English in the form of an impending area conference may have contributed to the failure of students to persevere through months of study. President Rhee's move to Pusan (where he is now mission president and starting up a new English for Latter-day Saints class) might also have removed some of the pressure on Church Leaders in Seoul to learn English.
Another reason behind the difficulties E-LOD classes have encountered is the simple fact that Church leaders are some of the busiest people in the world. Pressure from other sources, such as family, profession, and Church duties, must be countered by a compelling need to improve English skills if the necessary time is to be devoted to language study. That they have found any time at all to study English is a minor miracle, and that they have done so to such an extent that their proficiency has improved is a great tribute to these busy professional men. Many of them have commuted over long distances in order to attend English for Latter-day Saints classes. Some have found it necessary to listen to the tapes while driving since they have no other free time. Their desire to learn English is certainly great, and producing materials to help them improve their English communication skills has definitely been worthwhile. However, in order to serve a wider audience—one which has more time to study English—future English for Latter-day Saints programs may follow any of a number of different directions.

Some Possibilities for the Future

Only a few of these possibilities can be mentioned here. One would be to create materials to help Church members learn English when they have more time, that is, before they become leaders. For example, a program designed to help non-English speaking missionaries learn English from their English-speaking companions seems worthwhile.

Other peer-tutoring approaches which do not require a native speaker of English are also possible. Work on a gospel-oriented version of the highly successful Dyad Learning Program has already been started.

Another possibility would be to produce a self-contained set of programmed English learning materials, including tapes, which could be distributed through meetinghouse libraries. A moderately priced text and tape set which could be distributed by mail might also be feasible.

In some parts of the world, an English program resembling the recently developed Learn German Through the Book of Mormon, which builds upon the similarities between related languages, might be workable.

Although English for Latter-day Saints materials have not yet been used with women, there is a definite need for leaders of the women's auxiliaries to gain a proficiency in English. Sister Barbara Smith, general president of the Relief Society, has expressed her desire for a program designed for non-English speaking Church women, and local leaders in the E-LDS target areas have noted a similar need.

Without a doubt, the variety of possible, future English for Latter-day Saints programs is great. At present, it is difficult to predict the direction they will take.

One thing, however, is certain. The need for international communication in the Church will continue to grow, and as long as there are enthusiastic, dedicated Church members willing to devote their time and energy to learning English, TESL professionals in the Church have an obligation to produce materials which will aid these devoted brothers and sisters as they respond to the prophet's challenge.
After spending two years and one half in New England and Canada getting the Saints out, I started back with the last lot, about a hundred, from Boston. We landed in Pittsburg at dusk. We were anxious not to stay there, but to go on to St. Louis. I saw a steamer making steam ready to go out. I went to the Captain and asked him how many passengers he had. “Three hundred and fifty.” “Could you take another hundred?” “Yes.” The Spirit said to me, “Don’t go aboard that steamer; you nor your company.” All right, said I. I had learned something about that still, small voice. I did not go aboard that steamer, but waited till the next morning.

In thirty minutes after that steamer left, it took fire. It had ropes instead of wheel chains, and they could not go ashore. It was a dark night, and not a soul was saved. If I had not obeyed the influence of that monitor within me, I would have been there myself, with the rest of the company.

The Thirteenth Ward would not have had an Atwood for a Bishop; the Church would not have had a Leonard W. Hardy as Bishop. They and their families were with me, and also Brother Samuel Hardy, who is upwards of ninety years old and now lives in St. George, Utah.

I never disobeyed that Spirit but once in life; I did it then through the urging of other persons, and it nearly cost me my life. I have been acquainted with this Spirit. It was not the blow of trumpets, nor thunder and lightening; it was the still, small voice to me. All the way from my boyhood I have been governed and controlled by that Spirit.

LESSON 3: GLOSSARY

lot: group (not the usual meaning of lot: much, many)
He started home with the last lot of people.

dusk: after the sun goes down; twilight in the evening
They arrived home at dusk, tired and hungry.

anxious: eager; expectant
He was anxiously awaiting his mission call.

aboard: on; in (as in a vehicle, plane or boat)
The people got aboard the bus and it drove away.

took fire: burst into flames; caught on fire
The box took fire very easily.

influence: advice; suggestion; power
The influence of the Holy Ghost kept him out of trouble.

monitor: advisor; guide
The Holy Ghost was his sure monitor.

upwards of: more than; above
The building was upwards of 300 feet high.

disobeyed: did not follow
The boy disobeyed his parents, which made them very sad.

urging: persuading; pressuring
The man committed a sin because of the urging of evil friends.

have been acquainted: have had knowledge of; have known
That man should have been acquainted with the Lord before he died.

governed and controlled: led; directed
We should allow the Lord to govern and control our lives.
LESSON 3: COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

True/False Questions

1. All one hundred Saints were on the steamer that caught fire.

2. The captain was willing to take 100 extra passengers.

3. Brother Woodruff said he had never disobeyed the promptings of the Spirit in his life.

4. The Saints stayed in Pittsburg all night instead of continuing their journey.

5. Some people once persuaded Brother Woodruff to disobey the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. Where was Wilford Woodruff before this event took place?

2. What did the Holy Ghost tell President Woodruff?

3. What caused the steamboat to sink?

4. Name some of the people who were with President Woodruff.

5. What is the main idea of this story?
LESSON 3: DIALOGS

1

Thomas Wells: Do you ever have difficulty telling when the Holy Ghost is talking to you?

Patricia Brown: Oh yes. All the time. I can't tell if it is the Holy Ghost talking or just me.

Thomas Wells: How can you tell the difference?

Patricia Brown: I fast and pray, and hope I can tell when it is the Lord's will or when it is my wish.

Thomas Wells: Aren't you supposed to be able to tell the difference?

Patricia Brown: Yes, but you can't tell when you are selfish. I'm too selfish most of the time and want my own way.

2

Alice Park: Once I was prompted by the Holy Ghost not to take a ride in a car.

George Shaw: What happened?

Alice Park: Nothing happened. I just stayed home and didn't go.

George Shaw: Do you think if you had gone something bad would have happened?

Alice Park: I don't know. I just felt I shouldn't go, so I didn't.

George Shaw: Do you think it was the Holy Ghost telling you not to go?

Alice Park: Yes, I think so.
LESSON 3: DIALOGS (continued)

3

Max Lundberg: Have you ever ridden on a steam-powered boat?

Lynn Nichols: No, I have never seen one, except in pictures.

Max Lundberg: I would like to go for a ride on one of those old steamboats.

Lynn Nichols: Yes, that would be fun, but where would you go to find one?

Max Lundberg: I don’t know, so I guess I won’t be able to go for a ride on a steam-powered boat.

4

Sally Smith: Do you know anybody who can tell when the Holy Ghost is talking to them?

Ronald Williams:

Sally Smith: 

Ronald Williams:

Sally Smith: 

Ronald Williams:
LESSON 3: GRAMMAR NOTES

COMMANDS

A. A command or strong request always has the subject you. We could say You go home, or You hand me the salt. But, because the subject is always you, we simply leave it off.

Go home.
Hand me the salt.
Put on your coat.

B. The negative of a command or strong request is

do + not + verb

Do not go home.
Don't go home.

Do not hand him the salt.
Don't hand him the salt.

Except in very formal usage or in writing don't is used rather than do not.

C. A command is always in the present tense.

Go to the store and buy some eggs.
LESSON 3: WRITING TASK

407 Apricot Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84408
April 4, 1977

Graham Wilson
Route 1 Box 1498
Coalville, UT 84117

Dear Bishop:

(1) Enclosed is an announcement to be read in an appropriate meeting. (2) After it is read in the meeting, will you please post the announcement in a prominent place.

(3) If you have a question about this announcement, will you please write our office for an answer.

Sincerely yours,

John Wilson
Area Supervisor

A. Copy the above letter substituting note for announcement, important for prominent, inquiry for question and reply for answer. (Be sure to change a and an as necessary.)

B. Rewrite the letter changing announcement to announcements, meeting to meetings, question to questions, and answer to answers. Change the verb forms and pronouns as necessary. (Be sure to change this to these in sentence 3. Begin your letter: “Enclosed are announcements to be read in appropriate meetings.”)

TASK 2

Rewrite this letter making sentences 2 and 3 in command form by taking out will you before the please.
LISTENING COMPREHENSION
PROGRAM FROM THE OCTOBER
1976 GENERAL CONFERENCES

"THE PURPOSES OF CONFERENCES"
by President N. Eldon Tanner
First Counselor in the First Presidency

LESSON 7: THE PURPOSES OF CONFERENCES - PART I

1. Listen to these definitions of words which President Tanner uses in the first part of his talk.

   **briefly**: Briefly means lasting only a short time.

   *The prophet spoke briefly to the people.*

   that is
   *The prophet spoke to the people for a short time.*

   **specifically**: Specifically means particularly; definitely.

   *The Lord told Joseph Smith specifically to join none of the existing churches.*

   that is
   *The Lord told Joseph Smith definitely to join none of the existing churches.*

   **practicable**: Practicable means something can be done or carried out; possible.

   *It is not practicable to meet every day.*

   that is
   *It is not possible to meet every day.*

   **accomodate**: Accomodate means to have room for.

   *The building cannot accommodate all the people who want to attend the meeting.*

   that is
   *The building has not enough room for all the people who want to attend the meeting.*
THE PURPOSES OF CONFERENCES - I

Now listen carefully to President Tanner and answer the following question:

What two reasons does President Tanner give for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City?

NOW LISTEN TO THE TAPE OF PRESIDENT TANNER

Answer the question: What two reasons does President Tanner give for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City?

Stop the player until you have written down your answer. Then listen and see if you have answered it correctly.

LISTEN TO THE ANSWER ON THE TAPE

2. Here are some more definitions of words that you will hear in the next part of President Tanner's talk.

strategic: Strategic means favorable or advantageous.

America in 1830 was a strategic place and time for the restoration of the gospel.

that is
America in 1830 was a favorable place and time for the restoration of the gospel.

primary: Primary means main; first in importance.

A missionary's primary purpose is to call people to repentance.

that is
A missionary's main purpose is to call people to repentance.

environment: Environment means surroundings.

He was happy in his environment.

that is
He was happy in his surroundings.
THE PURPOSES OF CONFERENCES - PART I

Now listen carefully to President Tanner and answer the following question:

What two reasons does President Tanner give for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City?

NOW LISTEN TO THE TAPE OF PRESIDENT TANNER

Wherever I go, people seem to be interested in hearing about the area conferences we hold throughout the world. Today I should like to tell briefly why we hold them, how they are conducted, how the people respond, and the effect they are having in the different areas. I shall deal specifically with the area conferences held in Europe this summer.

President Kimball has explained that the Church has grown so rapidly throughout the world that it is no longer practicable to limit our general conferences to those held in April and October at the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the city of Salt Lake. First, it would be impossible to accommodate all the people who should come from around the world; and also, many who would like to come are unable to. So we are taking the conferences to the people.

Answer the question: What two reasons does President Tanner give for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City?

Stop the player until you have written down your answer. Then listen and see if you have answered it correctly.

LISTEN TO THE ANSWER ON THE TAPE

The two reasons President Tanner gave for having area conferences in addition to the two general conferences held each year in Salt Lake City are:

1. It is not possible to take care of all the people who would like to attend these two conferences.
2. There are many people who would like to come to the conferences who cannot make the long trip to Salt Lake City.